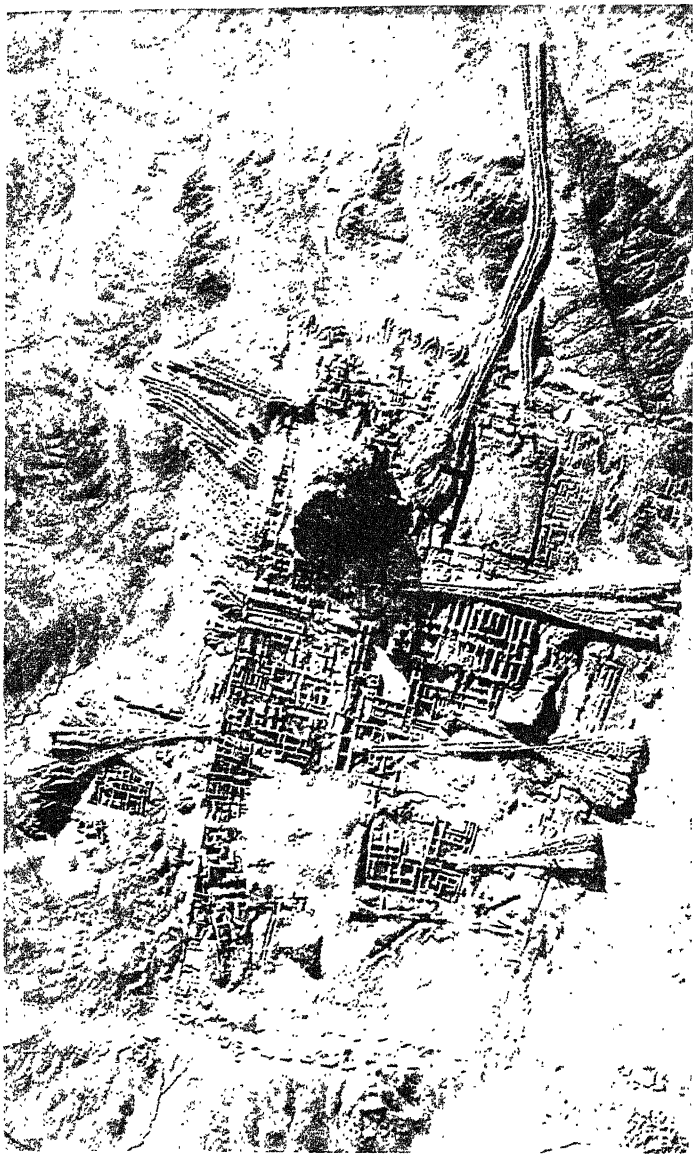


*Royal Air Force official*] [*Crown copyright reserved*

AIR-PHOTOGRAPH OF UR, TAKEN IN MARCH, 1927. The rectangular *temenos*, the dark mass of the ziggurrat, and the principal buildings uncovered are clearly shewn. The long or fan-shaped banks are dumps of excavated earth. Compare the plan, Plate 18. (After *British Museum Quarterly*, vol. I, pl. XLIV.a)

# HISTORY AND MONUMENTS OF UR

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# PREFACE

LESS than a hundred years ago it would have been impossible to write any history at all of the ancient oriental lands; to-day a single city in but one of those lands furnishes matter for a volume. It is the mark of a notable progress, won by a few decades of brilliant achievement in the study and in the field, but whether in this case ambition has not over-reached itself the reader will better judge at *explicit* than in the preface. If this book be held justified, then local history of ancient eastern cities is justified with it, since there are other places which offer as much material, and many abler writers to celebrate them. For the selection of Ur the author need advance no other reasons than the existence of a general interest in that city, and some personal acquaintance with it on his own part. But if the book must be judged a failure, he will presume to ignore the most obvious explanation, and seek a flattering excuse in the poverty and nature of his material, the austerity of facts vouchsafed, the multitude of those denied, the want of detail and personal colour; *ornari res ipsa negat contenta doceri.* In short, he will conclude that ancient history must know her place, and must not yet, without their gifts, seek to vie with her younger sisters.

The present work, then, is to be viewed as an attempt to gather from many sources the most interesting facts now known concerning the fortunes of Ur throughout its long life. To these the excavations have, of course,

made a notable contribution, but it is no part of the present purpose to describe those works, and therefore this book is in no sense a substitute for the preliminary accounts (to be mentioned below) published annually by the excavators; far less is it an anticipation of the full official publication of the excavations at Ur and in its neighbourhood, of which two volumes have already been prepared, and of which more are still to come. All that this book seeks to provide is an historical thread upon which the discoveries at Ur may be strung.

In all local history there must be the difficulty of keeping it duly mindful of its limitation without losing the wider context, and the reader will soon perceive that this difficulty has been felt here with especial force. The inclusion of perhaps too much of the background might be defended by pleading the scantiness of purely local information, and the general unfamiliarity of the subject; what is no doubt more serious is the unevenness of the treatment in this particular. The excuse must be that it is impossible to frame rigid principles of discrimination, and that in their absence the unregulated judgment is sure to be inconsistent. Yet in spite of whatever space has been here expended on the general history of Babylonia, Assyria, and the neighbouring lands, there may arise the necessity for the general reader to consult more comprehensive works, and (of those in English) he will then best refer to such books as Dr. Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East*, or the relevant chapters in the great *Cambridge Ancient History*. For the Riverlands in particular there are at his disposal the authoritative works of the late Professor L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad* and *History of Babylon*, now continued and partially revised by Mr. S. Smith's *Early History of Assyria*, with Professor Olmstead's *History of Assyria* to complete the period. Especially

is he recommended to the Appendix of Mr. Smith's book for a discussion of chronology, which has been purposely avoided here as unsuitable to the modesty of the present theme. In this book, therefore, Mr. Smith's dates have been simply adopted (with, of course, no more notion of finality than any conscientious scholar is at present entitled to hold), and it is needful to add only that those who wish to examine more at large the methods and results of the astronomical dating will find the whole question set forth with much lucidity in Langdon and Fotheringham, *The Venus Tablets of Ammizaduga*.

The bibliography of Ur itself consists principally in the publications of those workers on the site who have earned in so especial a degree (and are hereby most cordially offered) the thanks of an author whose book depends so much upon their labours:—the late Mr. J. E. Taylor (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, XV, 260 ff.), Dr. R. Campbell Thompson (*Archaeologia*, LXX), Dr. H. R. Hall (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, Dec. 1919; *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, VIII, 241 ff., IX, 177 ff.; *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Centenary Supplement, 1924, pp. 103 ff., *Central Asian Society's Journal*, 1922, p. 119), but above all Mr. C. L. Woolley, by far the longest and most successful worker at Ur, whose preliminary accounts have been regularly published in the *Antiquaries Journal* since 1923. In addition to these he has utilized his discoveries in his recent book on *The Sumerians*, and several of his reports with photographs have been printed in the Philadelphia *Museum Journal*, together with various articles by Dr. L. Legrain. To these must be added the two volumes of the full official publication which have already appeared, *al-'Ubaid*, and *Ur Excavations: Texts, I*. This list is not, of course, exhaustive.

Next only to the excavators in their claim upon the

author's grateful remembrance are those who have aided him in making this book such as it now appears. Mr. Sidney Smith had the singular goodness to crown the benefit of several discussions by reading (and in the outcome much improving) the manuscript; to him special thanks are due, and the help and encouragement of other colleagues, present and past, has never been wanting.

Many of the illustrations are selected from among those which have already appeared in the official publications, or in the authorized preliminary reports, particularly the *Antiquaries Journal*, the *Museum Journal* (Philadelphia), or the *British Museum Quarterly*. For the authority which they have granted him to reproduce these official photographs the author is deeply sensible of his obligation to the Trustees of the British Museum, as also for permission to illustrate several more familiar objects in their charge. In other cases his thanks are offered to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Air (frontispiece), to Professor Langdon, on behalf of the Joint Expedition to Kish (vase on pl. 3), to Dr. Contenau and the Museum of the Louvre (pl. 6*b*), to Dr. L. Legrain and the University Museum of Pennsylvania (pl. 18*b*), to Professor Andrae and the National Museums, Berlin (pl. 29), and to Dr. H. R. Hall for pl. 32*b*. Nor would the author be thought to forget the liberality and care of the publishers in undertaking and producing the book.

HARTLEY, KENT,
*June 6th*, 1929

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# HISTORY & MONUMENTS OF UR

## CHAPTER I

## BEGINNINGS IN FABLE AND FACT

IT is the paradox of the history of Ur that it ends in grosser darkness than it begins. Its pulse fluttered still when all real life had fled, and the last watcher had long departed. But the strength of a primitive memory prevailed almost back to the day of its birth, and marked that event as coaeval perhaps with the creation of the world, and of the men who first peopled it. Legend knew of a time

> When on high the heaven was not named
> And the earth beneath not called by name,

and the generations of the gods came into being from the union of their first parents. But still there was neither world nor men, only the grim monsters of chaos, " over all of whom there reigned a woman named Omorka, that is, in Chaldaean, Thamte, but in Greek, being interpreted, Thalassa [*or*, Sea]. . . . But when the universe was in this condition there came Bêl, who split the woman in the midst, and made the half of her into earth,

and the other half into heaven, and did away with the creatures that were in her. . . . Now Bêl, whom they interpret as Zeus, cleft the darkness in the midst, divided earth and heaven from each other, and ordered the universe. The monsters, which endured not the strength of the light, perished. . . . And Bêl, beholding a place unpeopled yet fruitful, commanded one of the gods to strike off his head, to knead earth with the blood streaming thence, and to fashion men and beasts that could endure the air. Bêl also made the stars, the sun and moon, and the five planets." Such is the account given by Berossus,[1] a learned Babylonian priest, who wrote in Greek upon the history and institutions of his country at the bidding of Antiochus, third successor of Alexander the Great. But his work, though composed at a time when the Babylonian nation was already fallen almost to extinction, and its culture within about a century of the final disappearance, hands on the primaeval legends no less faithfully than the native poems, so soon doomed to silence and utter loss, until two more millennia should recall them to sight and speech. By a signal revenge of time, the ancient books, now eloquent again from their clay pages, have triumphantly outlasted the scroll which interpreted them to the "modern" world of the Hellenistic East.

At the time when Bêl (whose true name was Marduk) began the work of creation, the universe was a waste of waters, as Berossus relates. One of the ancient versions adds vivid details—"no reed

had grown up, no wood was fashioned, no brick was laid, no brick-mould fashioned, no house was built, no city formed, no city built, no creature compacted." The oldest and holiest foundations were not then in existence, not even Nippur, Erech, and Eridu. But when the day of creation dawned "Eridu was built," earliest of all cities, and not until then did Marduk mould the race of men out of wet clay, so that these might "cause the gods to abide in the dwellings of their delight," by building their temples and maintaining their sacrifice. Eridu still keeps, from solitude, some of the majesty which it had through so many centuries from ancient awe. It is the nearest to Ur of all the great cities, so that these two were always, in some degree, sisters, the seats of two great deities, Ea, the water-god of Eridu, and Nannar, or Sin, the moon-god of Ur. Nothing is related concerning the creation of Ur, but, since its nearest neighbour was first made of all cities, its own foundation may have been but little younger in the reckoning of tradition. At least it is certain that Ur was already counted among the holy places of the land not long after the creation, when

war arose
And fields were fought in heaven

between the gods that were friendly and ill-minded towards mankind, for, at the onset of Marduk, "from heaven the storm-blast shrieked" and laid low Erech and Nippur. The gracious gods, led by Marduk, triumphed in the end over the old, jealous

rulers and their infernal allies, Enmesharra and his seven sons. They divided the earth between themselves, and each god chose his own city; among them Sin elected to dwell in Ur. Henceforth, no doubt, the cities arose again in peace, honouring their preservers with perpetual worship. But these were of too high estate to rule their subjects directly, and therefore were induced to "farm out" their domains to earthly stewards. The term is that which was actually used by the people themselves, whose early governors boasted the title of "tenant-farmer" (*isag*) of such-and-such a city, that is to say, they were bailiffs appointed by the god to administer the affairs of his property. In their civil aspect, however, such rulers were called simply "great man" (*lugal*), a word which may conveniently be rendered as "king"; it connotes, in general, a possessor. It is from this duality of conception that arises the simultaneous use of the two titles by one and the same prince. To his subjects he was their king, to his god he was but a steward, but it was to the second of these offices that he owed the first.

From this point, when gods entrusted the governance to a man among men, begins the formally historical part of ancient tradition. Since the gods were not equal between themselves, and since the things of earth were but a reflection of the things in heaven, it was manifest that neither could the officers of the gods among men be equal between themselves, but he who was

chosen by the king of the gods must be king of men, and more, king of kings. For each city-lord was king indeed over his own, but in subjection to an overlord no less than was his own patron-god to the supreme lord of the universe. When, therefore, a royal inscription proclaims that such an one is "he whose name was uttered by Enlil in Nippur" or "king of all kings," these phrases are conventional indeed, but not empty; they are fetched from a logical conceit of hierarchy divine and human. The great King List,[2] which will often fall to be mentioned in the following pages, embodies both the historical tradition of the land and its theoretical postulate, as already set forth. Drawn up, in its present form, under the Dynasties of Isin and Larsa, at a date which may roughly be represented by 2000 B.C., it enumerates the "kingdoms" which had existed since an age regarded as enormously remote, which period is divided into two very unequal parts by the catastrophe of the Flood. For whereas only eight (or ten) kings reigned before the Flood, some 130 are counted up to about the middle of the Isin dynasty; but the inequality is reversed when the length of the two periods is considered. The longevity of the pre-diluvian kings is counted by tens of thousands of years, and thus amounts to the stupendous total of some 240,000, while even the earliest of the post-diluvians have much ado to reign a niggardly thousand of years, and their whole number does not much exceed 30,000. It would, of course, be mere trifling to seek any

historical substance in this chronologizing, but it is of infinitely more importance to observe, that the learned considered the Flood an actual event, the supreme crisis in human history, and one which fell comparatively late in time; "Shuruppak," it is said, "was already old when the gods resolved to send the Deluge." Of this disaster it will be proper to speak again in its due order. Meanwhile legend has something, though not much, to tell of Ur in the patriarchal ages.

The second-hand excerptors of Berossus, and their wretched transcribers, have handed down the names of ten kings who lived before the Flood. Awkwardly tricked out at first in pseudo-Greek forms, these outlandish words had suffered so much progressive disfigurement that, when the cuneiform script was deciphered, it became a favourite and harmless diversion of scholars to divine the original forms behind the contorted masks. It is saddening to contemplate that, when the originals themselves were recovered, hardly anything of these grave speculations was justified. But there are now two separate versions in cuneiform enumerating these patriarchs and their cities. These discover, indeed, a certain discrepancy not merely as to lengths of reign (which are in any case so fantastic as to be unimportant), but as to the number of monarchs. The longer, which reckons ten, obtains this number by alleging two additional kings of Larsa, who may, however, be summarily ejected as the bastard fruit of misplaced patriotism; for this version was written in Larsa.

Nevertheless, ten appears to be the correct number, as reported by Berossus, for the shorter list omits two legitimate names, while the longer has merely ousted two others to make room for its intruders.

As regards the cities in which they held sway, the two native sources are in essential agreement, and the divergence of Berossus is not difficult to account for. Agreeably with its primacy in creation, Eridu is the first city to which "the kingship came down from heaven," for such is the striking phrase used to introduce the list of kings. The institution was withdrawn at the time of the Flood, when the gods in their anger had resolved to destroy mankind. But when betrayed counsels allowed the race to survive, the need for civil regiment once more appeared, and "after the deluge had spread ruin, kingship came down (again) from heaven," to be exercised by the dynasties after the Flood. To resume, Eridu, only a few miles from Ur, was the earliest seat of royalty, which, however, in this period never came to Ur itself, which has no pre-diluvian king of its own. This earliest of all kings, Alulim (Aloros) of Eridu, was thought to have established his throne as a barbarian among barbarians. "They lived," says Berossus, "in disorder, like beasts." He proceeds to relate the celebrated story of Oannes, a monster not so much in the form of a fish, as a man having thrown over his head, shoulders, and down almost to his feet, a cloak resembling a fish slit open down the belly, precisely, in fact, such a figure as is

commonly seen in Babylonian terra-cottas and on Assyrian stone-reliefs (pl. 1). Every day this being would converse with Aloros and his subjects, until gradually they learnt from him all the things of civilization—letters, sciences, arts, how to build cities and temples, to make laws, and parcel out land, to practise agriculture, and, in short, every polite accomplishment; "since which time," it is added, "nothing more has been invented."

Of this story as to the origin of culture no version has yet been discovered in the native literature, but it would be no very hazardous opinion if this were ascribed to chance only. For not only is it very evident that Berossus disposed of excellent material at present unrecovered, but the story itself is so characteristic of the Babylonian outlook that it could not be a late fiction. All knowledge was from the beginning, and all from Eridu, the seat of the god Ea, "deep" in wisdom as deep seated at the bottom of his *apsu*, or sacred well of waters under the earth. And the crowning knowledge was that of the diviner's and enchanter's arts, prerogative of the Water-god and of his appointed ministers. It is, indeed, from the history of these two disciplines that some valuable indirect testimony is gained as to the genuineness of Berossus' account. First, however, it should be added that Oannes was only the first of seven like monsters, who appeared in the land at irregular intervals during the reigns of the primaeval kings, and perfected in various sciences the precepts of Oannes. Now the seventh of these kings was Enmenduranki



Figure of a beneficent genius wearing a fish-cloak, probably in the guise of Oannes, who first

(otherwise Enmenduranna), who is called Euedorachos in the Greek version, and it was in his reign that there appeared the last of the seven monsters, who is called Odakon. The substance of this being's doctrine can be inferred from a later text, a prescription of rituals for the use of the diviner, which makes mention of "Enmeduranki, king of Sippar," saying that the gods granted him all the powers and all the insignia of the soothsayer. Odakon, then, it may be presumed, discoursed mainly upon *barutu*, the divining art. In its correlative, *ashiputu*, or the art of conjuring evil spirits, there may be found even more remarkable evidence concerning the tradition of the fish-cloaked bringers of wisdom. A notice which appears at the end of a tablet of medical receipts claims that the contents were first delivered "by the mouth of the ancient Sages who were before the flood that was in the city of Shuruppak." Elsewhere the same figures appear, almost in person, and with at least one detail which connects them with Ur. An elaborate ritual [3] directs certain magical figures of clay and wood to be fashioned according to a prescribed pattern, and buried under the floor round about a room, specially set apart and consecrated in a temple, in which lies a man possessed of devils; these figures are all representative of divers beings able to resist the incursion of fiends. First among these are "seven figures of the Sages, made of wood, crowned with the caps proper to them, and clothed in their proper clothing; in their right hands they

bear a staff with its two ends scorched in the fire, with their left hands they clutch their breasts." Other groups of figures, representing the same personages, show them clad in "fish-bodies," and holding other magical vessels and symbols. Upon each of these images its name is to be written, and these are of sufficient interest to quote:

(1) Day of life, offspring of Ur. (2) Day of plenty, gracious son of Nippur. (3) Day of delight, grown up in Eridu. (4) Fair day, arisen in Kullab. (5) Day of bright face, nursling of Kesh. (6) Righteous day, exalted judge of Lagash. (7) Day that grants life to the stricken, protection of Shuruppak.

Of the cities thus enumerated, only Eridu and Shuruppak appear among the seats of the prediluvian kings, and Sippar, the domain of Enmeduranki, is not among the birthplaces of the sages. There is not, however, anything in the tradition which requires that the monsters should have appeared always at the seat of the kingdom, and consequently there is herein no necessary discrepancy between them and the seven Sages. The curious names cannot, it seems, be brought into connexion with the (often corrupted) Greek forms in Berossus, and it must perhaps be supposed that the latter are derived from some personal names of the Sages rather than the descriptive styles given to them by the ritual. It does not appear why each is called a "day"; there may be here a magical allusion, if, indeed, it be not an allowable speculation that the reference is to the time of their

teaching, for it is related of Oannes that " by day he companied with men . . . but when the sun went down he sank again into the sea and tarried by night in the ocean, for he was amphibious." For the present purpose, however, it is of most importance that one of these Sages was identified with Ur, and hence another witness to the extreme antiquity of the city in native legend. It must now be considered what evidence there is of the historical value of such an estimate.

Of written material relative to these remote beginnings there is nothing but the tradition itself, which appears in such forms as those described above. It has already been observed that Ur is not among the pre-diluvian " cities of royalty " in the king-list. Yet Ur, as will appear later, has contributed the most emphatic material corroboration of the earlier (though not, indeed, the earliest) passages of that document, and uncompromising scepticism in regard to its statements is less in place now than it might have been only a short time ago. This, however, is a presumption in favour of a general respect for the value of the tradition rather than a confirmation of any of its particular allusions to Ur. Indeed, no such confirmation is at present to be had, and it is most philosophical, therefore, to hold that, inasmuch as the general level of accuracy seems to be high, those parts of the tradition which do not involve circumstances incredible in themselves may convey a very tolerable notion of actual facts. Applied to Ur, this would mean that the city existed, and

was already a centre of culture and the seat of the Moon-god's worship, in a distant past even before that calamity which centred upon Shuruppak (now Farah, above Ur on the old course of the Euphrates), which was known to all later ages as the Flood—concerning the actuality of which event, as there is no compulsion to believe, so also there is no real reason to doubt. To this period would also belong its name, Uri(m), signifying most probably "light," and perhaps identical with the Semitic word having that meaning, as was believed by the rabbis who compiled the Talmud. At any rate, the place was certainly called after its principal cult of the bright moon, being written with a group of signs expressing the notion "place of the abode of light (?) * (*uri-unu-ki*)," just as, for example, Larsa, the seat of the Sun-god, was written "place of the abode of the Sun." So persistent was the identification of the city and the god that a late Greek writer† has preserved the name of Kamarine by which, he says, some called Ur; and this appears to be simply an Arabic form of the "moon" city, thus designated through so many ages.

The beliefs and opinions of antiquity are handed down by communications, oral or written, which must of necessity be later than the events about which they are concerned. But the ambition of modern science is to question those events them-

* The interpretation of the word *uri* is, however, very doubtful. Some think that the sign depicts a sacred cult-object, the symbol of the moon.

† See below, pp. 177 and 254 f.

selves, not through any interpreter, however presumed faithful. So soon, however, as they are enacted, events become for ever voiceless, and leave only some few faint echoes in the mean relics of their material setting, whereof a later age

> Exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila
> Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.

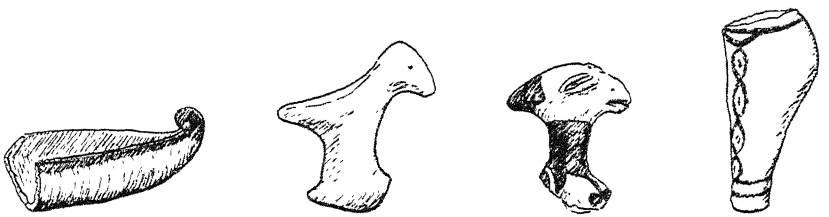
Often much less, for javelins and helmets will perish of their own rust, and are at once less enduring and less vital than the household gear and crockery. Thus the despised things of the past constantly become the treasures of the future, and all the realities of ancientest Ur that now remain are its castaways, its long-dead men and its broken vessels, its cemeteries and its potsherds. At the little mound now called al-'Ubaid, some four miles from the city itself, has been found an outlying sanctuary of the mother-goddess, where, in the midst of fields and canals, were kept the cattle whose increase at once symbolized and attended the beneficent power of the deity. It will be, in its due order, for the next chapter to describe the historical importance, the material remains, and the religious use, of this place. The present purpose is to observe the scanty vestiges,[4] so far discovered mostly at al-'Ubaid, of the earliest population which has left relics of itself in or about the city of Ur. South-east, then, of the low mound which covered the ruined temple was an even slighter rise in the ground, which proved to be the site of a primitive village and a cemetery used for

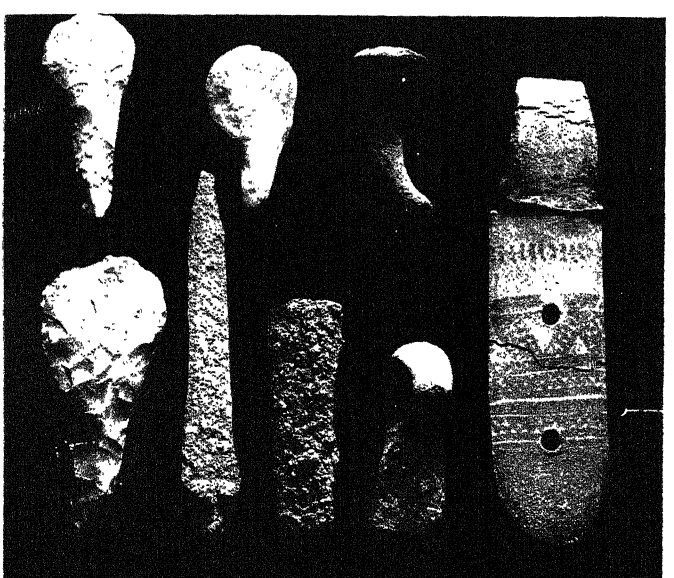
burials at two different periods, each of somewhat uncertain length, but separated by a considerable lapse of time. The main distinctions between them were (*a*) that copper was very scarce in the first, but plentiful in the second; and (*b*) that the first used pottery with somewhat elaborately painted decorations, while the second had virtually no trace of this ornament, but contented itself with plain buff vessels, and those of different shape from the earlier. To the first of these periods belonged the primitive village already mentioned, as well as the burials containing the decorated pottery and stone implements. As appears both from the remains of their dwellings and from the mean furniture of their graves, these earliest inhabitants were not great or wealthy people, but, as might be conjectured from the nature of the cult in the near-by temple, a small community of neatherds and dairymen, the humbler servants of the bucolic goddess. A remarkable scene upon a frieze from the later temple shows the successors of these men engaged in their tasks about the sacred cattle, some herding, others milking, others again straining and churning the milk, menial duties which yet must be performed by priests since all are of a high significance to the welfare of the king and of his land. This description applies directly, indeed, only to the people of the later period, but such is the evidence of continuity, though interrupted, in the cult at al-'Ubaid, that there need be little hesitation in referring from the conditions of the later age to those of the earlier.

These first inhabitants of Ur—for their remains have been found in the city itself as well as in the adjacent village—lived at a time which cannot be computed in any precise relation with better known epochs of the city's history. All that can be asserted is that they were undoubtedly divided by a long interval from the First Dynasty of Ur, itself reckoned only the third among the dynasties that arose after the Flood. When the temple at al-'Ubaid was built (or perhaps rebuilt) with great magnificence by the second king of that dynasty, the old cemetery came into use again, being probably remembered by tradition as the proper spot for that purpose, but the presence of earlier graves had been quite forgotten, so that the people of the First Dynasty, in digging their new graves, broke up and destroyed the old burials with their accompanying utensils, which seems to prove that there had intervened a time long enough to obliterate all recollection of the ancient villagers. Before, however, any attempt is made to estimate the period to which the painted pottery belongs, it is worth while to look somewhat more closely at the life of its makers as revealed by the contents of their graves. Their houses, built upon what seems to have been a slight natural rise in the ground, were humble structures of reed-matting supported upon posts, the whole being fortified in parts with mud walling. In spite of this unsubstantial character, they were not mere temporary dwellings, for they used stones as pivots for the door-posts to turn upon, and such solidity

in the accessories bespeaks permanence of the whole house. Such constructions, indeed, have always been characteristic of the land, and may be commonly found at the present day, with or without some accompaniment of brick. Probably they were roofed in a manner equally characteristic of the land, and equally long-lived, with a flat mud covering resting upon mats, the whole being supported by poles laid across the top of the walls. Of the dress and general appearance of these people there are only one or two very conventionalized clay figurines to give a notion, but something of the conditions of their life may be gathered from the relics of their implements (pl. 2). A pottery model of a boat and remains of fish-bones tell of their avocations upon the canals, rough grinding-stones, and the unhandy-looking sickles of baked clay are evidence of their agriculture; elsewhere, indeed, grains of wheat have been found stored in a jar of painted pottery resembling that which was used at al-'Ubaid in this earliest settlement. Tools were mostly of stone, hoe-blades of flint, polished celts of other hard stones, and knives of obsidian flakes, sometimes made with saw-edges. None of these materials was easily to be had in such a stoneless country, and therefore even the tools were imitated in pottery for funerary use to avoid the waste of a serviceable article.* Bowls also were made of stone, despite the high

* "Another Indian sage was asked, 'What loss is that to which no advantage whatsoever cleaveth?' And he replied, 'The loss of the raiment which is laid with the corpse in the grave.'" (BUDGE, *Laughable Stories of Bar-Hebraeus*, cxxii.)





Painted pottery figurines and models, stone, copper and baked clay implements, made by the earliest inhabitants of Ur; mostly from the neighbouring village of al-'Ubaid (p. 16)

(After *al-'Ubaid*, pll. XLVI, XLVIII)

development of the potter's art. Although the traces of metal are ambiguous it is most likely that it was known, though not plentiful, and too expensive to be in much use among the poor folk of the village. But the shapes of the flints are not those of a pure stone age, nor has any certain evidence yet been found in 'Iraq of a population so primitive as to have no knowledge of metal. The custom in disposal of the dead was to bury the body with bent legs directly in the earth, without coffin or wrappings, but supplied with vessels for food and water, simple tools, and perhaps a necklace of beads, thus providing for the needs of a future life, or at least enough to prevent the ghost from straying abroad. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that these earliest graves owed their presence at al-'Ubaid to the same religious ideas as those which animated the later users of the same cemetery. It was the property of the goddess to whom the neighbouring temple was sacred to give life, to sustain it, and to restore it when lost, so that there could be no more desirable place for the dead to lie than beside the dwelling of the goddess who could give again their spent breath. This apparent community of practice with the dynastic inhabitants of Ur in the matter of funeral rites seems to avouch also a community of religious beliefs, and this is of importance for deciding the racial identity of the makers of the painted pottery, as will appear later.

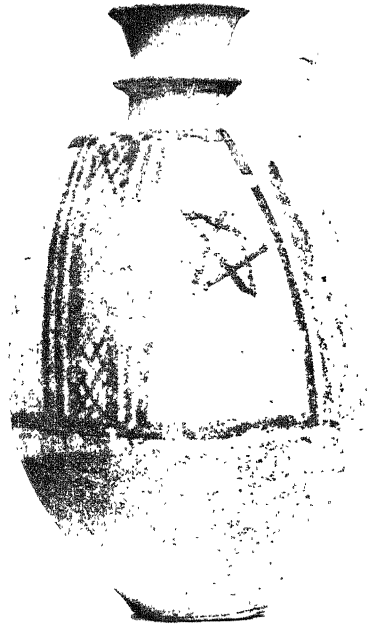
It is this pottery which is the most distinctive product of the early settlement at al-'Ubaid, and

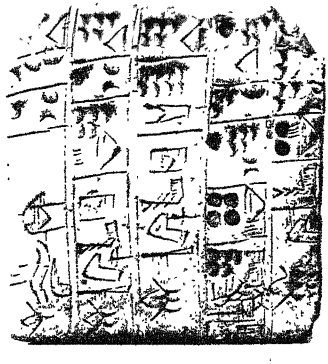
the one which differentiates it most clearly from its successors. Found mostly in broken fragments on the face of the surrounding desert or loose in the disturbed soil, it had once been laid as complete pots in graves which were afterwards dug into by other graves of a later generation, or gradually destroyed by erosion when the place was finally deserted. The prevailing type has designs, mostly geometrical, in black paint upon a hard buff or greenish surface; a few naturalistic patterns are found, and a very small proportion of the sherds has polychrome decoration of red and black upon the brown surface; in shape, the commonest forms are open bowls and small pots with a narrow mouth, a sharply-bent shoulder half-way up the body, and sometimes small pierced lugs for suspension by string. Only at Eridu, a few miles away, has pottery almost exactly similar in fabric, paint, design, and shape, been found in Babylonia, but early painted wares with geometric patterns were very widely spread over the ancient East. The nearest relations of the al-'Ubaid type come from Bandar Bushire, on the Persian Gulf, and from the mound of Musyan, while a greater or less resemblance can be traced in the designs upon the two different styles of painted ornament found in the excavations at Susa. At Kish also a painted ware has appeared, probably of about the same age, but differing in shapes, designs, and particularly in its greater use of red. Indeed, it is possible to extend the area of this characteristic product enormously, for pottery which has the

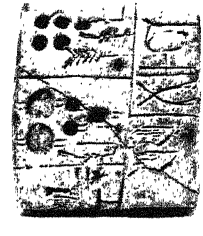
general qualities of early date, painted decoration, and geometrical design, and can claim some varying degree of resemblance with that of al-'Ubaid, has been reported from Samarra, from Eastern Persia, from Turkestan, and even from China! But dating is the difficulty in every case, for, while there can be no doubt that each of these wares is of high antiquity, there can be no guarantee that they are all contemporary, even within the widest limits. Whether it will ever be possible to co-ordinate in any way these wide-spread manufactures which have so generally similar an appearance, the future must show; but since the pottery is in most places almost the only relic of its makers, there is nothing to compare except its own properties, which can betray little concerning the race, the age, or the civilization of the men who produced it.

Rather than to indulge these boundless speculations out of season, it will be more to the purpose to regard the potsherds of al-'Ubaid as the first monuments of Ur, and to search out what orts of history still lie among them scattered upon the desert, hard to discern. Graves of a later generation more exactly dated have violated the ancient dead, and the painted vessels are overlaid with the funeral furniture of men who used a wealth of copper, but had scarce a vestige of the old potters' bravery, and made their jars, bowls, and bottles in the plain yellowish clay which sufficed for nearly all the employments of later periods. These later graves were dug, as is proved

by the style of their contents, for men who lived as subjects of the First Dynasty of Ur, which, though itself reckoned only the third dynasty in order after the Flood, must yet have been very considerably later in time than the first village at al-'Ubaid, if the existence of the early burials upon the same spot was so utterly forgotten that they could be ruthlessly broken up. Or is it rather to be supposed that the First Dynasty was of a new and different race, careless of the indignity wrought upon dim predecessors or ancient enemies? Nothing at al-'Ubaid can answer this question; it has, indeed, already been observed that in both ages the dead seem to have been laid here for their hope in the mercy of the healing goddess who dwelt hard by, and thence it would be concluded that they shared the same beliefs and local cults. But even so it would not follow that both were of the same stock, since cults, with all else pertaining to civilization, may be inherited from a dispossessed people. The answer has come from elsewhere. About seventeen miles north-east of the site of ancient Kish, in a small mound called Jamdat Naṣr, there has recently been found a ruined building, destroyed at the time when the painted pottery flourished, and ever afterwards deserted. This proved to contain a great quantity of vessels and sherds, decorated, in black and red upon the buff ground, with bands, chequers, and lozenges (pl. 3), thus resembling in general the ware of al-'Ubaid though differing in some details of shape, design, and colouring; that it may be







Spouted vase of painted earthenware, and two clay tablets inscribed

assigned roughly to the same date and the same race of men there is little room to doubt. And in the closest association with this ornamented pottery at Jamdat Naṣr lay a hoard of about a hundred and fifty clay tablets inscribed with an early form of that writing which, as the " cuneiform " syllabary, was at once the supreme invention, the most pervasive carrier, the characteristic symbol, and the lifelong nurse, of the Babylonian culture.

Although the primordial beginnings of this script still lie buried in the darkness which it was so brilliantly to illumine, the general history, and even many of the stages, of its development can now be plainly discerned. Like every other form of writing, it began with pictures, and very early passed through the decisive process of using certain of these pictures merely for the sound of the words represented, without reference to the idea; fully developed, this system enabled the writer to spell his words phonetically, retaining only so much of the old pictography (*i.e.* the expression of ideas by means of the corresponding pictures) as suited his convenience. This character was, in fact, retained by the cuneiform writing until the end, the purely phonetic manner never completely ousting the " ideographic," but, indeed, remaining quite ancillary to it until the script was pressed into the service of a language other than that for which it had been invented. Where or when this great invention was made cannot be settled with any exactness. As touching the place, there is no reason to think it was elsewhere than in the

River-lands themselves. Nothing in the repertory of pictures to which the signs can be traced back is inconsistent with the conditions of life in those lands [5]; on the contrary, there are certain indications, such as the presence of reeds, canals, and irrigated fields, which distinctly suggest the riverain landscape, and even the south country rather than the north. As to the time at which writing began the computation is even more insecure. But at least one specimen [6] has been recovered of the script in its completely pictorial form, before the beginning of that stylization which has in many cases altogether obscured the original outline of the signs. This specimen must be dated before the painted pottery, since the tablets of that period already show some obscuration of the pictures, and the painted pottery itself must be allowed several centuries before the earliest historically-fixed writing, that of the First Dynasty of Ur. If, then, a round date of 3000 B.C. be assigned to that dynasty (the reason will appear subsequently), the very beginnings of writing will not need to have been made much before 3500 B.C. Greater precision can hardly be expected, and a much higher antiquity ought not, without due cause, to be asserted. Granted, then, if only as the dimmest shadow of fact, that the "cuneiform" writing arose in Southern Babylonia about the middle of the fourth millennium, a further question remains, Who were its inventors? To what people had Oannes revealed the arts of civil life, so various and comprehensive that nothing had since been

devised and so detailed that it must have needed not only six other visitants to repeat, but cunning scribes to indite, the matter of his lessons ?

The earliest named inhabitants of the alluvial plain which is the deposit of the Tigris and Euphrates were the people who are now called Sumerians, such being, in all probability, the name which they applied to themselves, or to the main portion of themselves. It is true that the earliest inscriptions which contain references to the country as a whole call it simply "the Land" (*kalam*), reserving the name of Sumer (*ki-en-gi*) apparently for the immediate neighbourhood of Nippur, but from about the twenty-fifth century onward there appears the dual term "Sumer and Akkad," denoting respectively the southern and the northern parts of Babylonia, between Eridu in the south and a point above Sippar on the Euphrates in the north. Moreover, the speech of this region, but more particularly of the south, was definitely called "Sumerian," though, indeed, it is not quite certain whether the name applied to the speech as a whole, or only to a particular dialect of it. Formally correct or not, however, the term "Sumerian" has a perfectly definite meaning; it describes the earliest population which is testified in the territory called al-'Iraq by the Arabs, having its chief centres in the southern districts. The often-agitated question whether this people was indigenous is pointless, for the answer in either sense can only be conjectural. A less ambitious and more reasonable inquiry will observe that

absolute autochthony is a purely theoretical concept, and will be content to learn that the Sumerians possessed the land since as far back in time as anything at all is seen or even obscurely divined, and it has already been remarked that their own legends, which profess to go back to the creation of the world and of men, have their setting in no other land than their historical home. It is not uncommonly suggested, and occasionally stated as a fact, that they entered the country from the north-east, while others have brought them from the south. These are guesses. But when the painted pottery was first discovered so great was its contrast with the ordinary undecorated wares of historical times that a point seemed at last to have been reached when an earlier race was still in possession of the land; it was inferred that so striking a change of custom could be due only to the coming of a new population. Were that so, the history of Ur would have been begun by other men than those who enacted it to the end, little affected in the mass by accessions of new blood. In reality, the change was of fashion, not of race. The discovery at Jamdat Naṣr (already described) of written tablets in association with painted pottery has brought the earliest traceable inhabitants of Sumer into the line of their successors, and has shown that they also were Sumerians. Why later generations should have discarded their gay-coloured crockery can only be imagined. The increasing use of copper and greater skill in the working of it may have had

much to do with the change, the demand for fine vessels being transferred to the new material. Painting did not expire suddenly and without a struggle, for remains of the old technique are found upon pots which reach down to the historical period.

The oldest dwellers in the neighbourhood of Ur, being thus identified as true Sumerians, ought to have some place in the Sumerian historical tradition, for which nothing, even up to the creation, is too early. And so, doubtless, they had, but the connexion is at present missing. They have, at least, a definite *terminus ante quem* in the First Dynasty of Ur, from which they were separated by a long, though quite uncertain, lapse of time. The tradition, for its part, recognized before that dynasty, and since the days of the Flood, the two fabulously long kingdoms of Kish and Erech, each lasting its thousands of years, and numbering gods, demi-gods, and men among its rulers. Before these was the Flood, and before that the patriarchal age, with still many more thousands of years. Fancy is free among these countless centuries to place the first villagers of al-'Ubaid where it will. It is perhaps most natural to suppose that they lived under the rule of Kish or Erech, during the vaguely long span which the "thousands of years" reflect. A bolder speculation might think of the wood and wattle huts which these primitives dwelt in, and then remember the words [7] of the god to the last patriarch, who was saved from the Deluge :

> "Thou man of Shuruppak, son of Ubar-Tutu,
> Pull down the house, build a ship,
> Let go wealth, seek after life,
> Hate possessions, preserve life,
> Bring all seed of life into a ship."

The kind of houses that later kings raised for themselves, huge masses of brickwork, would have been no buoyant material for the Sumerian Noah to ride out the flood. What his house afforded him, as the same poem tells, was mostly wicker-work needing only to be reshaped and coated inside and out with pitch in order to furnish a ship like the coracles which are used on the Tigris about Baghdad to this day. In short, the last "king before the Flood" made his palace in a lowly structure of reeds and basket-work, not otherwise than the first occupants of the little mound near Ur, though these were humble herdsmen, and he a king, the favourite of a god. If any one wishes to conclude from this that the users of painted pottery themselves were men who lived before the Flood, he will, indeed, seem insane or jesting to those who hold that event an outrageous fiction; to others, he will be merely daring in hypothesis, and one who baffles assent or confutation by the obscurity of the matter alleged.

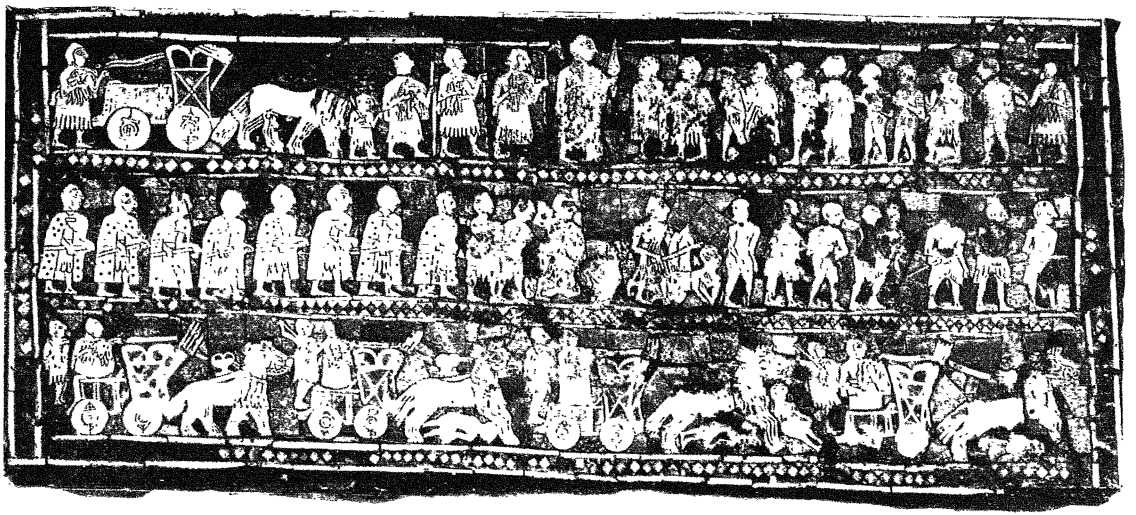
## CHAPTER II

# THE FIRST HISTORICAL AGE

BETWEEN the perplexities of an historical scheme which mystifies by exaggeration, and of an archaeology which dissimulates by incompleteness, a trustworthy thread, of ever-growing strands, directs the way. The products of human industry and ingenuity, as they rise again from deepest oblivion out of the earth to which they seemed so unworthily returned, challenge by their waxing mastery, inverse to time, the flattering trust in length of days to reach perfection. So, at least, it is in Sumer, where the works of earlier ages, as they successively become known, differ from their descendant counterparts nowise so much as in their higher excellence; it is as if men not only invented nothing more than they had at first from Oannes, but even missed some of the virtue, as they moved from the source, of their inspiration. But when the river thus appears to flow upwards it can keep no march with the onward fall of time. Works of art which astonish by their beauty have been found, not least at Ur itself, to be the relics of the first, not the last, ages. Nothing but the good fortune that they were recovered by regular excavation could have

avoided a ludicrous misconception of their date. But even had all the resources of the expert digger been thwarted by luckless circumstances, there was still the thread, the development of Sumerian writing. Upon this all-important matter something has already been said (p. 21), and it will be needful to appeal again to this criterion for a better understanding of what falls next to be considered.

Deep beneath one of the least conspicuous parts of the city's area have been found the tombs and the funeral appurtenances of the population which succeeded the painted-pottery makers. The contrast of these with the poor villagers of al-'Ubaid, whose only luxury was their gaily decorated earthenware, is astonishing. If those were the humble ministrants of a rustic shrine, these were the great of a city-kingdom, recipients of a wealth only to be acquired from the revenues of a lucrative trade which their citizens carried on, for scarce any of the rich commodities in which they abounded is to be found in their own land. Gold is the material of their possessions and the symbol of their superfluity. In their flourishing days and at their lavish court, the arts of manufacture rose to a perfection and beauty in their products which was never seen again. The articles made were, indeed, of much the same kind as those of later ages, but they were, at this very early period, marked by a richness and splendour rather of Egyptian sumptuosity than of the supposed sobriety of the River-lands. These deposits



NE SIDE OF THE MOSAIC "STANDARD", FROM AN EARLY GRAVE AT UR: SCENE OF WAR
ND TRIUMPH (p. 30) (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. LIX)

PLATE IV

amaze by their riot of gold; silver also is there in great profusion, evidently "nothing accounted of," and there are actually fragments of iron, doubtless the earliest historical examples of that metal.

What makes this earliest passage of the city's history rise before us with a life more vivid than any later age is not merely the unmatchable richness and beauty of its craftsmen's work, but two monuments in particular which preserve the actual personality and appearance of the people, and display them in several of their most important activities. To these might be added the "dairy" frieze from al-'Ubaid, as belonging to a time which cannot in any case be far removed, but this will come more naturally to be described later in the present chapter. Of the two monuments already mentioned by far the most interesting is the pictorial "standard" (so-called, though its real purpose is very doubtful) found in a stone-built, three-chambered tomb which must have contained funerary offerings of great magnificence before it was plundered by ancient robbers. This most fascinating of all the antiquities of Ur is at once the oldest and the fullest series of pictures from anywhere in the ancient world; the famous "Stele of the Vultures" itself is not only, it may be presumed, rather later in date, but shows nothing like the wealth of details of Sumerian life in war and peace, not to mention the crude but strangely pleasing blend of bright colours, which are found upon the "standard." Little description of the scenes depicted is necessary, since they can be

studied in the illustration (pll. 4, 5), but it should be explained that they are made by inlaying shell figures in a background of lapis-lazuli, the whole mounted with a bitumen backing on boards, these colours (white and blue) being diversified by red and black fillings which emphasize the details of the shell figures. One side of the standard reveals the king at war, almost in the manner of a primitive cinematograph. The king himself, tallest of all the figures, attended by his principal officers or perhaps his sons, receives a line of prisoners haled before him; his chariot, with driver and boy-groom, awaits him behind. The two lower registers show all arms of his troops in action—the skirmishers, the heavy phalanx, and the splendid chariotry, with their four-abreast teams of asses and four-wheeled cars. They move in single file to the right, the first is already at full gallop, the next two are less extended, the fourth has just begun to move; it is not yet in touch with the enemy, who fall under, or are bowled over by, the charging van. On the other side of the standard are the celebrations after victory. The king and his officers sit on chairs at a feast drinking wine to the sound of harping and song.* Below, the booty captured from the enemy is led or

* οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τί φήμι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι
ἢ ὅτ' ἐϋφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κατὰ δῆμον ἅπαντα
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκουάζωνται ἀοιδοῦ
ἥμενοι ἑξείης παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων
οἰνοχόος φορέῃσι καὶ ἐγχείῃ δεπάεσσιν.

(Homer, *Odyssey*, IX, 6–10.)

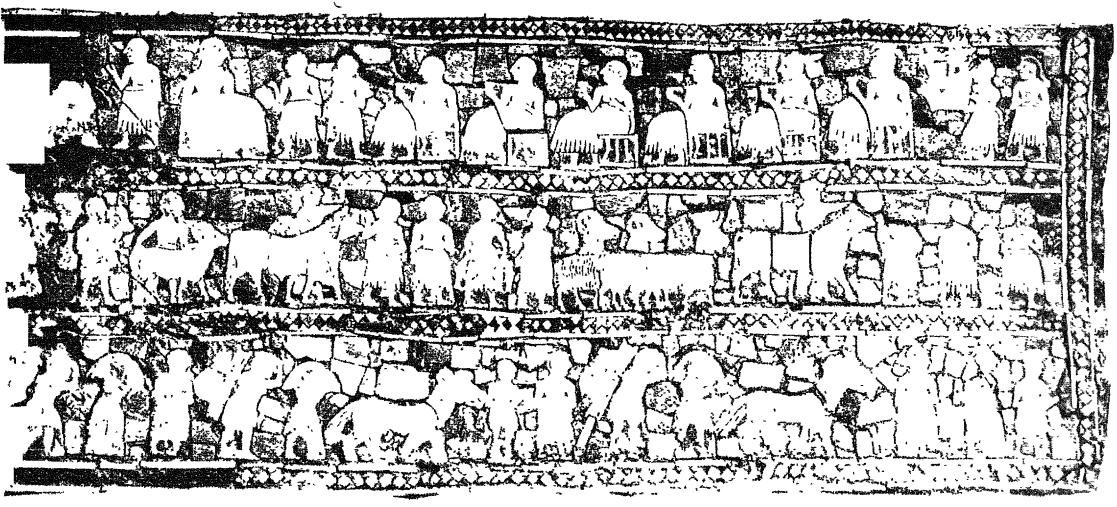


PLATE V

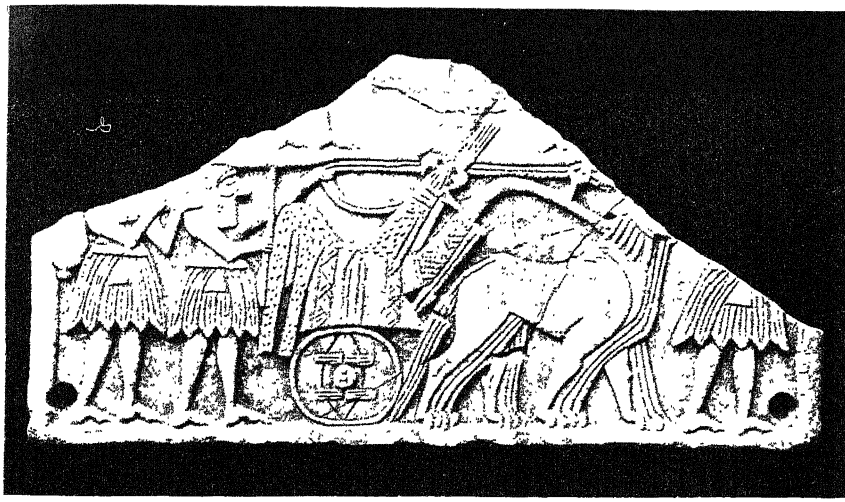
SIDE OF THE MOSAIC " STANDARD ", (see pl. 4): SCENE OF FEASTING AND BRINGING SPOIL (pp. 30f.) (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. LIX)

carried in by servants and porters, the cattle to furnish the banquet, the teams and gear to be divided among the chiefs. A dozen details reveal themselves to more careful examination: the shape of the harp and of the cups, of the rein-rings on the chariots, of the weapons carried, the various head-coverings and dressings, the mode of carrying burdens by a band around the forehead, the goats and even the fish brought in for the meal, the animals so faithfully observed, the utensils all exactly pourtrayed, as the surviving originals are there to prove.

The second of these monuments is a small rectangular plaque of limestone,[8] made to be affixed to a wall or chest, sculptured on the front in low relief. The upper part of this being almost wholly broken away only a part of the lower register survives. It is occupied by a man standing behind, and seemingly about to mount, a chariot drawn by four asses harnessed abreast. His right hand holds a stick, his left is raised and grasps the thick cord reins, the slack end of which is fastened to the front of the car; before reaching the animals' heads they pass through a double ring on the high-arched pole. The chariot itself has a wooden frame with a covering of wickerwork or matting, a leopard's fell thrown over the whole. A deep quiver contains the warrior's weapons, his axes with heads like a reversed $\epsilon$, and his arrows, point downwards. The wheels are of a curious fashion which discovers alike the ingenuity of the workman and the practical experience of many

years. But the highest interest is in the driver himself. He is naked except for an unusually short skirt of sheepskin, rendered in the invariable though rather unnatural convention of the Sumerian artists. Short as it is, this skirt nevertheless displays a triangular patch in the middle of its front, which can hardly be other than a sort of cod-piece,* and the same garment is worn by the two attendants who are also to be seen before and behind the equipage. The driver's head-dress is elaborate and seems to be a wig though not necessarily so; it falls down over each shoulder in a broad band, with horizontal marks to indicate rows of curls or waves. The beard is worn full, but apparently without moustache. Two more human figures appeared in this scene, one standing behind the driver, bearing on a stick over his left shoulder some oddly-shaped bag or vessel, the other in front of, and no doubt holding, the animals' heads, but the upper parts of both are now missing, though their dress can still be seen, identical with the driver's. That the chariot, both two and four-wheeled, was already in common use is remarkable enough when it is considered that it did not appear in Egypt until introduced by the Hyksos conquerors, but since Eannatum of Lagash led his army so mounted at a time which

* This was a part of the dress which needed some attention over rough going, for its derangement was of ill omen; the augurs' books had a warning, "If the prince mounts his chariot and grasps the reins, and his cod-piece or his headgear jumps off, that prince will be had in derision."—(*Cuneiform Texts*, XL, Pl. 36, line 42.)



(*a*)



(*b*)

(*a*) Limestone plaque: a warrior and attendants, with chariot and team of four (p. 31)
(After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. V)

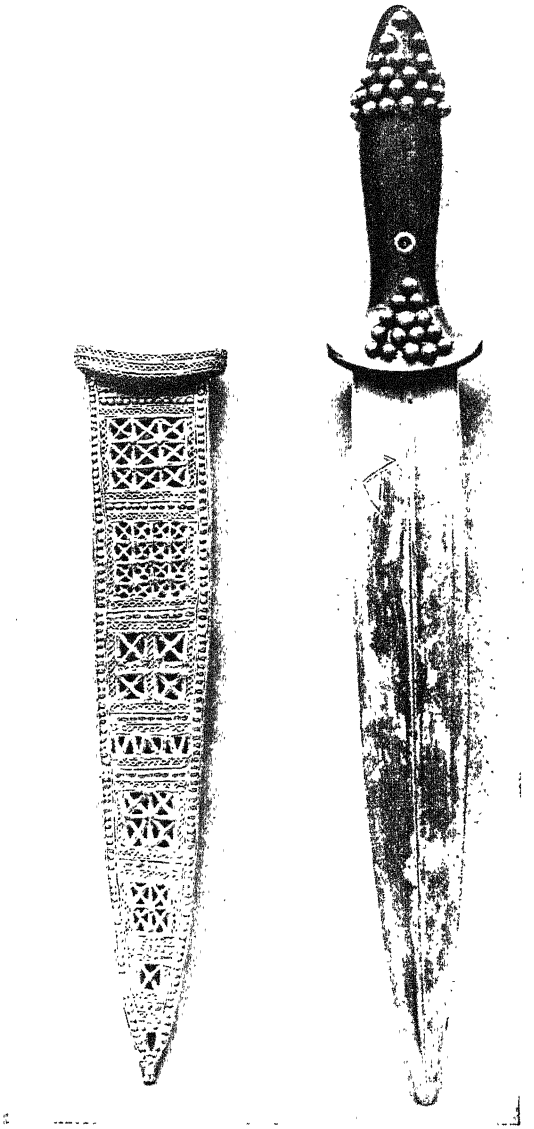
cannot, in any case, have been very much later, the existence of chariots in the earliest days of Ur is not so much to be wondered at, and the skill of the wheelwright shows that it was even then no new thing in the land.

Comparisons with the human figures of these monuments are rare, for little indeed of so early a date has yet been recovered, but a few objects at least here come in question. One is a broken round pedestal* for a statue, found at Lagash, which is sculptured round the side with two meeting processions of men; the respective leaders seem to greet each other while their attendants stand observing them in respectful attitudes. The hair of the two chiefs is dressed in precisely the style worn by the driver on the chariot-plaque, but one of the two is bearded, the other shaven, and the followers of the latter are completely shaven, head and beard, in the fashion which became universal some generations later. To complete the resemblance, the beardless leader raises in his right hand a stick, like the charioteer, but since there is no chariot here it may be permissible to call it a sceptre in both cases. Another comparison, much less striking, is furnished by fragments of a very early slate plaque from Kish, inlaid in white limestone with figures of warriors driving bound captives before them.[9] Victors and prisoners both have long hair and beards, but in other respects their dress is widely different from that of the Ur charioteer.

* See pl. 6 (b).

Space would fail for any attempt to describe the many other treasures which these tombs have yielded, gold and silver work, sculpture, small carving and inlay, nor could any words convey a notion of the mastery which distinguishes the best, and dignifies the more ordinary, pieces. But certain facts which have revealed themselves in these objects, and in the finding of them, throw light on the religious beliefs and customs of that time, and therefore deserve special mention. One is the apparent practice of human sacrifice: the principal tombs were surrounded by a whole bevy of dead bodies, not buried there as in graves of their own, but laid in attendance upon the great one inside the builded chamber. There were soldiers to guard, waggons, oxen, and drivers to convey the offerings, women to bear company, all as if slain (or at least placed) there to go with the dead and minister to him in the next life. Certainly it is too early to say that such human sacrifice was the prerogative of royalty, since there is in fact no proof that the occupants of the tombs were kings and queens, but in any event it was a practice which seems to have died out completely in later days, for it is no more found or heard of.

Even more interesting, because fully established instead of contradicted by the usage of later times, is the unmistakable evidence that, even in this early age, that solicitude to banish evil influences, which seems almost an obsession of Babylonian religion, was already keenly felt. In



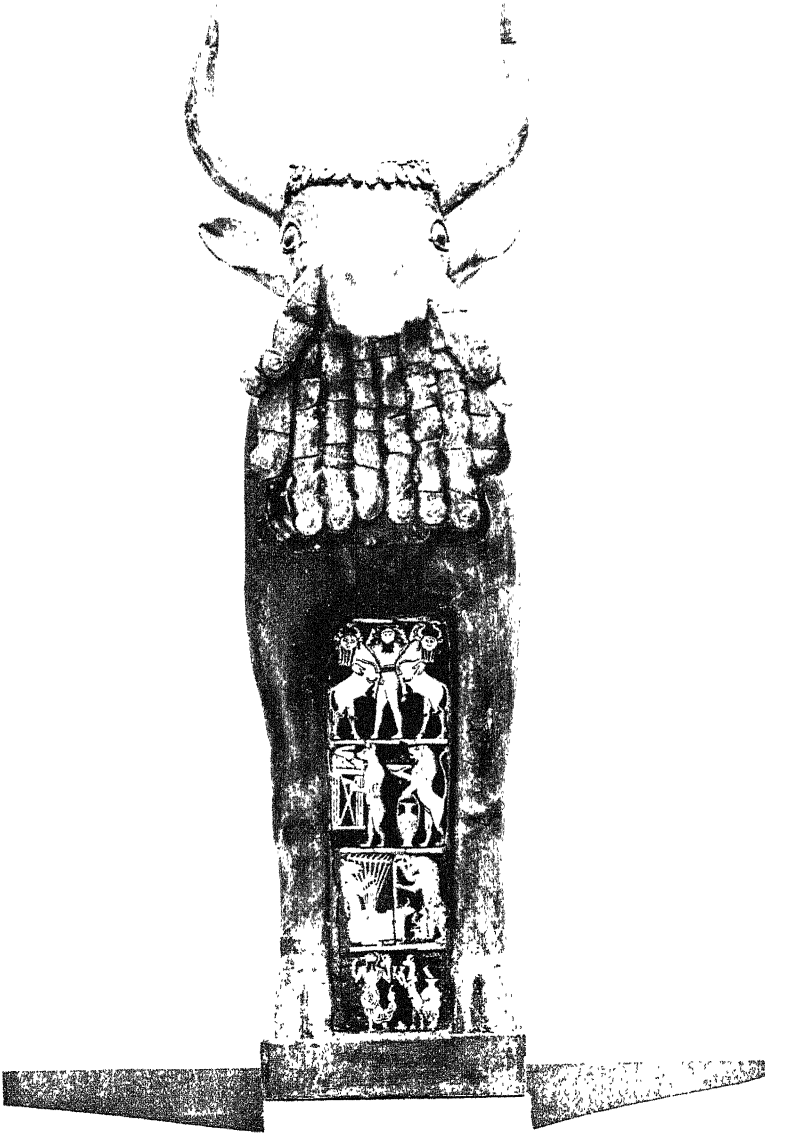
Gold dagger, with handle of lapis-lazuli ornamented with gold studs, and a gold sheath of elaborate workmanship; from an early grave at Ur.

(After *Illustrated London News*, Nov. 26th, 1927)

what is called the "King's grave" was a bull figure, perhaps the base of a harp, the wooden body of which had decayed away, but the head remained, being made of thin sheet gold hammered over a wooden core. The hair on the forehead, and a heavy beard were represented by tesserae of engraved lapis-lazuli. Most surprising of all, however, were four engraved plaques of shell (pl. 8) which reached down from the neck of the bull to the ground. In execution these are masterpieces even in an art which the Sumerian carvers had brought in other examples to the highest perfection, but it is the subjects which are their chief attraction. Except for the first, which shows a naked being in human form grappling with two bearded bulls, they are all animal representations, but the striking feature is that these animals are all engaged in human activities. There are a hound and a lion bringing in food and drink, an ass plays the harp,* while a bear dances before him and a small creature shakes a sistrum with one hand, resting the other upon a flat instrument on its knees. Lowest of all is seen a strange scorpion-man, who holds, with an oddly affected gesture, two doubtful objects in his hands. He is followed by a gazelle which brings two tumblers of drink freshly drawn from a great jar standing behind him. So novel are these representations that a full explanation of their meaning can hardly be attempted at present, but it does at least seem certain that they are not merely fanciful or intended to be humorous, though

* Incongruous enough to be proverbial—ὄνος λύρας.

that is certainly their effect. One detail is very significant and suggests an explanation not merely of the style of the pictures but, more remotely, of their purpose. If the lion in the second scene be observed closely it will be seen that the left fore "paw" with which he grasps the high handle of the wicker-covered vase has entirely the form of a human hand. Further, this hand appears from under a skin, which can be plainly descried hanging down the forearm and over the hand. In all the other animals, indeed, the "paws" with which they grasp objects, or pluck the harp-strings, are similarly formed like hands, and consequently this might be explained as a mere necessity which the artist felt to give his animals something with which to perform their unaccustomed actions. But the case of the lion's left paw is surely too clear to be mistaken, especially as the artist has been at pains actually to show the hanging skin. The conclusion is very strongly suggested that all these "animals" are in reality men wearing animal disguises. That such mummery was a feature of Babylonian religion is well attested by the fish-men, scorpion-men, lion-men, bull-men, and the like, who are not merely figured on the sculptures but are prominent in the rituals designed to drive away fiends by opposing to them beneficent monsters of an animal and fabulous kind. If this explanation of the "animal" figures should be correct, it would lead immediately to the further inference that the common subject of these four plaques was a religious ceremony designed to expel



Statue of a bull, reconstructed; the head of gold foil with inlaid eyes, and beard and horn-tips of lapis-lazuli. Between the forelegs are four carved shell plaques with representations of magical ceremonies (see p. 35)
(After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. LXIV)

demons from the proximity of the dead. To dilate upon this theme would here be out of place, but there are, it may be said, at least three or four elements in these pictures which are entirely consistent with such a notion; among them we mention only the harp, upon which the whole was probably mounted, and which the ass plays in the third scene. The efficacy of music in casting out devils is well known, for which it suffices to remember the incident of Saul and David. To spend no more words, there is at least a strong probability that here already, at the end of the fourth millennium, is striking evidence for the existence of religious beliefs which were hitherto thought not to have, at any rate, attained their strongest influence until the latter centuries of Babylonian civilization.

The main historical problem which these earliest and most brilliant of the Ur antiquities present is to decide upon their dating. Briefly the question is whether this epoch of unparalleled accomplishment was that of the First Dynasty itself, or of some local reign which could not yet claim for itself a place in the king-list. The first test is, of course, the position of the deposits in the earth. Close to the surface were discovered the graves of men who served the royal house of Agade, about the twenty-sixth century before Christ. Somewhat below these were other burials, from one of which there seemed to come a cylinder-seal which had belonged to the wife of Mes-anni-padda, first king of the First Dynasty of Ur,

perhaps to be dated about the beginning of the third millennium. With these, since the First Dynasty was itself reckoned only the third "after the Flood," it might have been supposed that the very earliest historical limit had already been reached; indeed, this alone was an antiquity long unhoped-for. But the gold deposits lay considerably deeper yet, and thereby seemed to prove their owners earlier than that earliest of Ur's recorded kingdoms. The evidence of position is somewhat detailed, and cannot be presented in full here,[10] but the ultimate difficulty is that these objects are all derived from graves, and there is, of course, no limit to the depth to which a grave may be sunk, so that this test is of rather doubtful validity. Resemblance of the men on the chariot-plaque to other early sculptures unfortunately proves nothing more than its right to be counted among the very earliest works of Sumerian pictorial art, for the other monuments are equally undefined in date. The most that can be ventured with some confidence is that the round pedestal from Lagash is more primitive than the sculptures of Ur-Nina, founder of a line of kings in that city, who, by the chance of discovery, are at once the most familiar figures and the most useful chronological *points d'appui* to modern research. Probability, than which there is at present no higher authority, is certainly against placing these riches before the First Dynasty. Were it so, they must have been the treasures of some local prince who amassed them under, and in despite of, the

nominal rule of Kish or Erech, seats of the first two dynasties "after the Flood" over a long, vague span of years which the list modestly computes at about twenty-seven thousand! But, however ineffectual the control of these overlords, it is unlikely indeed that they should have suffered any vassal to acquire and display such magnificence as this, attainable only by extensive tribute or trade, both implying supremacy in the land. Hard by, though above, these deposits was found the seal of Mes-anni-padda's wife, in style certainly no later than those which belonged to the deposit itself. For the wealth which this monarch left to his son the temple of al-'Ubaid, presently to be described, is evidence enough. The like cunningly engraved shell plaques were certainly made also under the First Dynasty; the ancient deposit at Ur has revealed into what effective settings of coloured stone these little pictures, delightful in themselves, were made to be fitted.

So far, then, it has remained doubtful to whom the oldest treasures of Ur must be ascribed, whether to the First Dynasty itself, or to some earlier unrecorded kings. The position in which they lay is somewhat in favour of the latter, historical probability and their intrinsic character weigh heavily for the former. The last, and what should be the most informative test has still to be applied, —what is the appearance of the few inscriptions (pl. 10) which stand upon these objects? On two golden bowls is engraved the name of their owner, Mes-kalam-shar, and on three cylinder-seals three more

names, one being the "queen." It must be confessed that the style of writing in all these cases is very unfavourable to the higher dating; the signs used are of a form indistinguishable from that of the age of Eannatum and Entemena at Lagash.* The famous golden helmet (pl. 9) of Mes-kalam-shar is almost exactly that which Eannatum wears on the "Stele of the Vultures," and there is a general likeness between the warlike scenes there and upon the Ur "standard." So also Ur-Nina appears in his "family group" drinking from a cup of the exact shape of the gold and silver tumblers from Ur. Indeed, a number of close resemblances can be traced between the remains of early Lagash and the contents of the Ur tombs, whereas there seem to be no particular differences, either in art or epigraphy, except for the much greater richness of what has survived from Ur. But since, as will appear later, the First Dynasty of Ur is itself nearly contemporary with early Lagash (perhaps a little older), it certainly seems best for the present, if the choice lies between the round dates of 3500 B.C. and 3000 B.C. for this most flourishing age, to keep close to the later.

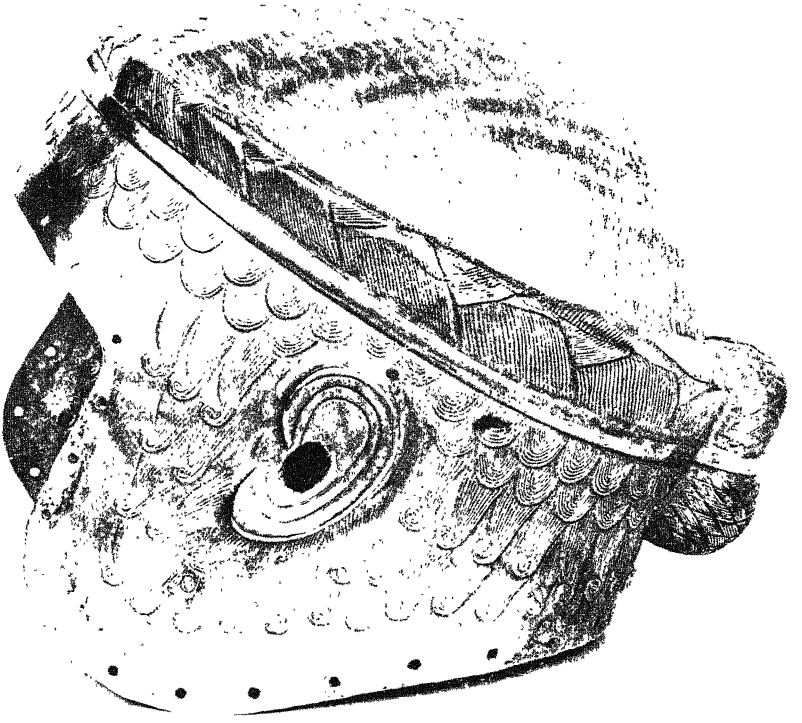
If, however, it should prove that the splendours of this first age were already laid in the graves of their creators when the rulers of Ur raised their city to supremacy in the land, then the ruins have as yet yielded little which could have been assigned to the First Dynasty. It would perhaps have

* See below, p. 69 ff., 77 ff.

been thought that the immense antiquity ascribed to that time by the king-list must carry it far beyond the utmost reach of modern discovery. Even the seal inscribed with the name of Mes-anni-padda's wife (pl. 12) could only by a doubtful guess have been connected with the founder of this dynasty. But the suburb of al-'Ubaid has shown what the metropolis would have hidden, and, as the preceding paragraphs reveal, it is not now a question whether the First Dynasty has been reached, but whether it has not already been overpassed into a still more remote age. Nothing, of course, is known of the circumstances in which the dynasty was first set up. The king-list has its set phrase for the transfer of power—" at Erech the dynasty was smitten, the kingship passed to Ur "—which may well be true, but is an unsatisfying commonplace. Is it perhaps this battle which is depicted with such spirit on the " standard " ? It would be far more interesting to hear what manner of kingdom that was at Erech which Ur thus overthrew. In the list it comes second " after the Flood " with twelve rulers whose total length of reign was 2310 years. When first founded it centred at the great temple of E-anna, and it was only in the time of its second king, Enmerkar, that the city of Erech itself was built, for the first king was a great conqueror and invader, who " went on to the sea and up to the mountains," as the list pauses to remark. Enmerkar and his successor Lugalbanda, a god, were the heroes of a number of stories, still very little known, but

evidently preserving some distant reminiscence of the earliest coming of the Sumerians into their land. These two were succeeded by even more famous characters, the god Tammuz himself, and Gilgamesh, principal actor in the most celebrated of all Babylonian literary works, the story of the search after eternal life. It is fairly evident that the two dynasties of Kish and Erech, nominally successive, and both reputed of fabulous length, account between them for a very long, vague epoch which begins at the dawn of Sumerian historical consciousness, and may give the formal outline of a civilization rising *pari passu* in north and south of the country, Akkad and Sumer forming in embryo at a time almost pre-historic.

Such is the epic period of nations, when gods and men mingle freely together, and the great tales begin to be told. But when the First Dynasty of Ur appeared these days were already left far behind; there is no trace of the superhuman in any of the traditions about it. Four kings have only some 170 years given them by the list, and actually there were five, not four. None of these is divine, and no miracles are ascribed to them. For some reason the historical memory of Ur was exceptionally good, for, after this interlude of sobriety, the list proceeds with several more kingdoms and reigns of extravagant length, but none of the three dynasties of Ur exceeds the range of easy credibility. On the material side, the results of discovery accord excellently with the literary tradition. When the First Dynasty



THE GOLDEN HELMET OF MES-KALAM-SHAR, FROM ONE OF THE EARLY GRAVE
(see p. 40) (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. LIV)

appears it is the heir of a long progress of culture, and possesses all the arts in magnificent development, perfected through the centuries that are counted to the primitive kingdoms of Kish and Erech. It was established, it flourished and declined, it warred, built, left an unparalleled wealth of craftsmen's work to endure even to this day, wrought much of which no memorial remains, then passed away, and was entirely human.

Only the first three kings of the five have any historical personality, the last two are names. All of them were revealed by the king-list, a doubtful trace of the second and third remained in a document from Nippur, a forgotten reference to the first has been disinterred from a schoolboy's text-book. Yet it is correct to say that, before the exploration of Ur, they were unknown, for these sparse allusions were unrecognizable, and it was, indeed, commonly suspected that the First Dynasty of Ur might well be as apocryphal as its patriarchal surroundings. It has proved that the soil of oblivion lay thinnest over these ancientest kings at one obscure spot in the desert, and from the little mound of al-'Ubaid they have arisen to full reality and the confusion of doubters. The oldest building at this place, and its remarkable decorations, were claimed as their work by the inscription (pl. 12) which the builder himself had written and laid in the foundation—"A-anni-padda, king of Ur, son of Mes-anni-padda, king of Ur, has built a temple for the goddess Nin-khursag."

It was a most fortunate chance that the father's

name was added, for otherwise the record would have been historically useless, no A-anni-padda, king of Ur, being known, since his name is, by some accident, omitted from the king-list. But Mes-anni-padda, king of Ur, was unmistakable, and it became at once obvious that his son's building carried back the extant monuments of Ur to the very beginning of the city's records. Of Mes-anni-padda himself scarce anything is known, though a little may safely be conjectured. The formal record conveys that he came to power by right of victory over the last king of Erech, whose name is given as Lugal-kiaga, and that he reigned eighty years. Where two statements alone are vouchsafed it is odd that one should be false; yet the second is demonstrably so. Eighty years is an uncommonly long reign, but could not have been positively rejected if discovery had not exposed the source of error. Actually, the dynasty became known directly through A-anni-padda, a king unmentioned in the list. By what oversight, or when, he was omitted is unknown, though it is a fair guess that the great similarity of his and his father's names caused the inadvertence, but the result was that the eighty years which they shared were all given to Mes-anni-padda when the son's name was lost. Both, therefore, were long-lived rulers. The school-book already mentioned preserves among some miscellaneous sentences, given as specimens of translation from Sumerian into Akkadian, these random words: "the temple which Mes-anni-padda built now lies ruined, the

enemy has destroyed it." Quoted at hazard from some old poem, they say no more than that he was a builder. Certainly his son was too, but the same is true of any Babylonian prince. Further, he had a wife, whose seal has been found, her name or title obscurely written upon it. Such are the trivialities which time has preserved of a powerful monarch, the first historical king of Ur. Conjecture can hardly add more than a presumption of great wealth, since his son was able to lavish splendid ornaments upon the outlying temple at al-'Ubaid and he himself cannot have found Ur empty of all such riches as had been laid in the early tombs there, even if, indeed, these were of some generations before him, and not actually of his own time. This wealth can have come in only from tribute and trade, both of which presuppose wide dominions, but the knowledge that Mes-anni-padda held the " kingship " of the whole land contributes little to the definition of these, as it remains quite uncertain for these early days what extent or what nature of supremacy is thereby implied.

Of his son, A-anni-padda, even less is heard in tradition. In fact, but for the discoveries at al-'Ubaid, he would have remained unknown and even unsuspected. But now that his existence has been positively established it appears that his name still clung obscurely to a building at Nippur called the Tummal. This had first been built in the remotest antiquity, for it is said to have fallen into ruin before the time of the celebrated Gil-

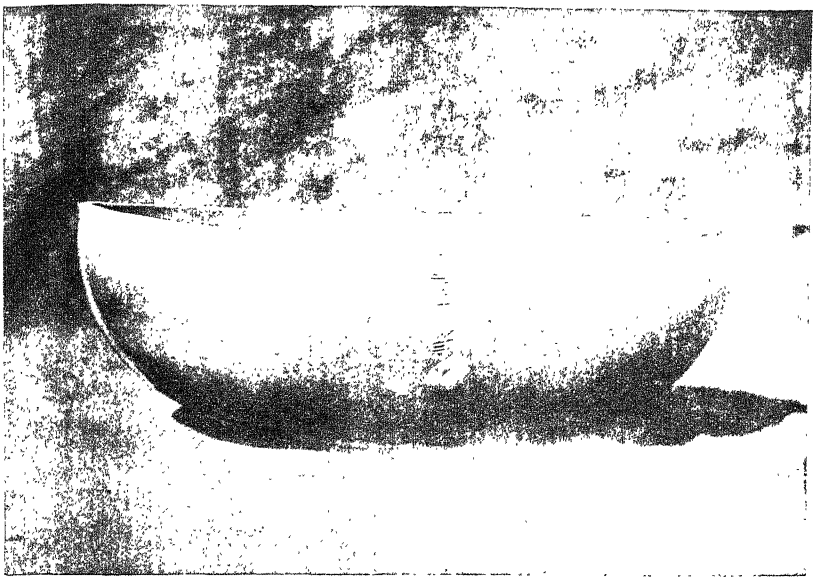
gamesh who began the task of rebuilding it and bequeathed the work to his son. Subsequently it fell again into ruin, and was next repaired by one Annani or Nanni, who had a son Meskem-Nannar. But this was the name of the third king of Ur, and hence Annani or Nanni seems to be no other than A-anni-padda in garbled form. Beyond this almost unrecognizable allusion, and one more dedication inscribed on a bronze peg of uncertain origin, there seems to be nothing whatever concerning him except what has recently been found at al-'Ubaid, but that is much indeed. Not, certainly, that these ruins have anything to reveal about the man himself, or even the events of his life, but concerning the art and the religion of his day they are eloquent, and thus indirectly allow an estimate of the date when his family made its city the first in the land.

Nothing could be less impressive than the little mound called al-'Ubaid before its excavation. It lies in the open desert four miles west of the imposing ruin of the ziggurrat of Ur, which is the only feature in a landscape of grey nothingness. On some days of bright sunshine at the end of 1923 the great tower, viewed from al-'Ubaid, looked like a volcano, when high clouds of red dust flew over it from the shovels of men clearing its sides. By contrast al-'Ubaid itself was a mean sand-castle, with a slice cut out from one of its sides. Traces of a broad canal-bed could still be faintly discerned leading towards Ur, and all about the ground lay the innumerable litter of

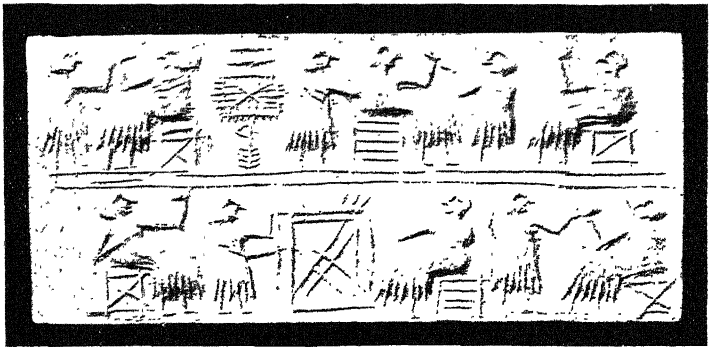
antiquity, bits of painted pottery, black on green, and all sorts of stone fragments every one telling of human industry, for in that place there is no stone that has not been brought there. Then also fragments of copper, even more certainly left there by man. It was these relics which first drew the attention of Dr. H. R. Hall, of the British Museum, who discovered the site and began to excavate it in 1919, with results so astonishing that the work was resumed and completed by Mr. C. L. Woolley in 1923–1924. A very brief account of the most important finds there must occupy the next few pages.

Small as it was, the mound covered the ruins of three buildings raised at different periods upon the same site, each replacing the last when it had fallen into decay, that is, the same building was twice renewed with certain changes of design. At first only the latest of these could be identified and practically nothing remained of it, but its few bricks were stamped with the name of Shulgi, a king of the Third Dynasty of Ur, who reigned about 2250 B.C. The second had preserved more extensive but less instructive traces of itself. It covered a fairly wide area with a thick layer of grey mud-brick, laid in irregular steps over the surface of a still earlier mound, itself formed by the collapse of a structure which had first occupied the place. The "second building" bore no name and produced no associated objects; its period, therefore, can only be guessed, and its interest in any case is very small. It was in the undermost

ruins that everything of importance lay, and the later temples, by a fortunate chance, had rather protected by their own *débris* than crushed with their weight the overthrown ornaments with which the first builder had adorned his work. That builder was revealed by a small marble foundation-tablet (translated above, p. 43) as the second king of the First Dynasty of Ur, and his work as a temple of the mother-goddess Nin-khursag. The plan and something of the nature of this building came to light as the digging proceeded, but what first drew attention was the wealth of decoration, chiefly copper-work, which had survived among the ruins. It became clear that most of this had been originally set up outside the walls, and had been preserved by this very fact, for the walls in falling outwards, though they had somewhat crushed the metal, had kept away from it much of the dampness which would soon have dissolved it utterly. The temple itself was apparently small, and stood upon a solid platform of which it occupied only part of the surface, leaving the rest as a courtyard. When discovered, indeed, it was only the stump of the platform that remained, but the collapsed walls of the building above could still be traced, where they had fallen out over the edge. This platform was surrounded by retaining-walls with alternate sunk panels and flat surfaces, resting upon rough stone foundations, above which they were carried for less than half of their height in courses of baked bricks, and for the rest in crude, or sun-dried, bricks, both kinds being of the



(*a*)



(*b*)

TO ILLUSTRATE THE WRITING AT THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY GRAVES, IN WHICH THE TREASURES OF UR WERE DISCOVERED:

(*a*) Gold bowl inscribed with the name Mes-kalam-shar
(*Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. LVIII)

(*b*) Cylinder-seal of A-bar-gi (see p. 40)

awkward form called "plano-convex," flat on one side, and sharply bulged on the other, thus needing a thick bed of mortar between each course. The four angles of this roughly rectangular mass faced the cardinal points of the compass, and the temple seemed to have occupied the south corner. It had at least two, and perhaps three, doors, that on the south-east side being at the head of a flight of stone steps which led up on to the platform, the other one or two doors leading out on to the open court which adjoined the north-east and north-west sides of the temple, and had access to the ground-level by another flight of steps on the south-west of the platform. Such was the general arrangement of the whole structure so far as it could be deduced from the state of the ruins. There could be no doubt that it had suffered violence of man before the decay of time, for much of its furnishings had been dashed over the edge of the platform, and lay where it had fallen, able so to suggest, five thousand years after, the places from which it had been torn.

There was not much that seemed to have come from within the temple; most of that had doubtless been carried away as treasures by the destroyers. Perhaps two stone figures had once been placed there to represent their makers in the attitude of unceasing petition before the goddess. Of one, only a fragment survives the "axes and hammers" of those who "broke down all the carved work" of the place, the other (pl. 13) is well-preserved, and shows a squatting man with

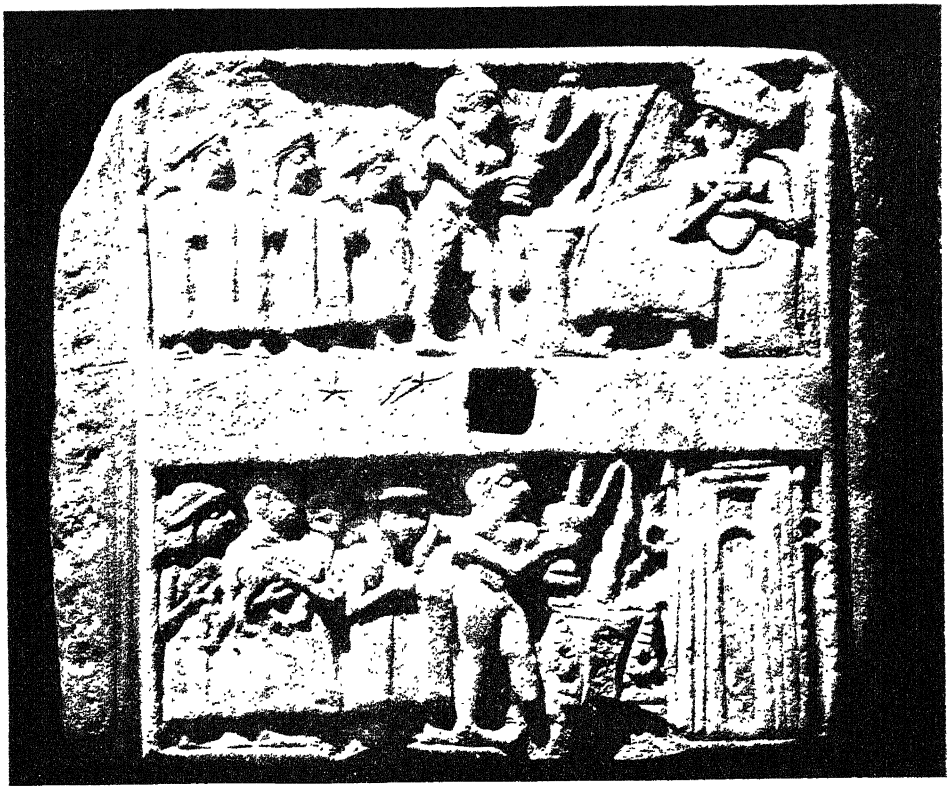
waist-high skirt, hands clasped in the gesture of prayer, a shaven face and crown, and a comically smug expression. A typical Sumerian in his physical features he is pourtrayed in the most antique style of sculpture, soon to be replaced by the sitting or standing statue. An inscription upon the broken torso gives the name of its dedicator, and the complete figure perhaps represented the same person. He was a certain "Kur-lil, keeper of the granary at Erech"; it is added that "he fashioned (a likeness of) the goddess Dam-gal-nun, and built (her) temple." He was, no doubt, a high officer of the realm, holding some sort of governorship over Erech on behalf of the king of Ur, and had been permitted by the king to share in the building of the temple at al-'Ubaid, since it is hardly probable that his inscription can refer to any other work, Dam-gal-nun being only another name of the mother-goddess otherwise called Nin-khursag.

Apart from these figures all the other remains seem to have been external decorations, more notable, indeed, for their brilliance than for their suitability to the stress of such a position. Most ambitious was the great panel (pl. 14) which seemed, from its position, to have fallen from over the lintel of the principal entrance, at the top of the south-east steps. Within a plain, thick frame stand three figures in very high relief forming a balanced group. In the middle a lion-headed eagle hovers in mid-air with wings outspread, and clutches in each claw the hindquarters of two stags which face

outwards. The eagle's head projects above the frame, and those of the two stags face the beholder, being brought out in front of the panel and fully modelled in the round, each head surmounted by splendid branching antlers. The whole of the frame, panel, and relief is covered with sheet copper, hammered over the surface and nailed down with copper nails, the edges of the sheets overlapping. Like the bull figures and reliefs, presently to be noticed, this great panel was actually fashioned throughout in roughly-shaped wood, and the finer detail of the bird and the stags modelled up in a thick coat of bitumen spread over the wood, the thin copper plates being finally hammered down over the surface. Only the heads of the stags (and presumably also of the eagle, though it was not preserved) were made in the full round, and these may have been cast in copper, the cavity being then filled with bitumen, and the whole head fastened to the body by a wooden tenon. The ultimate effect of the whole is that of a sculpture cast in solid copper, most impressive by reason of its size (7 ft. 9 ins. by 3 ft. 6 ins.), and of the considerable success with which parts, at least, of the design have been executed. Particularly the stags' heads, with their fine antlers of solid copper rod, are modelled with skill and a good deal of spirit.

What is the object of this scene cannot at present be made out with any certainty, although it is one of the commonest devices in early Sumerian art. The lion-headed eagle, at least, can be identi-

fied with some confidence: he is the divine bird called in Sumerian Im-dugud or "heavy storm," which was known to the Semites by the name of Zû. Many stories were told about this creature, all representing him as a maleficent being, hostile to the gods, whose prerogatives he once audaciously sought to usurp, by stealing the "tablet of destiny," but was foiled by the Sun-god, who caught him in his net as he was fleeing with this palladium in his possession. Cylinder-seals are sometimes engraved with the scene of a half-human bird being dragged as a prisoner before a seated god; this may possibly be the judgment of the thievish Zû. But the actual group of this bird seizing two animals (which may be lions or goat-like creatures, as well as stags) is found in many examples, on stone tablets and mace-heads, on vases, and on cylinder-seals. It was once supposed to be the "coat-of-arms" of the city of Lagash because it first appeared on the early monuments of that place, but later discovery has shown it to be a symbol of universal significance. Since it often stands in close relation with the gods, and is so popular upon seals, which always represented things of favourable import, it cannot depict the triumph of evil, in spite of the prominence of the baleful Zû. Whatever its meaning, the significance of this fine relief from al-'Ubaid as a primitive work of art is unaffected; by far the most ambitious effort in copper-working of anything like its age in Babylonia, or even, so far as is known, in Egypt, it displays a command of processes and of design



Limestone plaque, used as a support for a votive object, rudely sculptured with scenes of libation and sacrifice before a god and before the gate of a temple.

(After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VI, pl. LIII)

which, imperfect as it was, need scarce fear comparison with anything that was done by later centuries in that land. When all differences in purpose and technique have been allowed, it can hardly be claimed that Shalmaneser III's celebrated bronze gate-bands, of the ninth century, show any greater mastery than A-anni-padda's copper reliefs of the thirtieth.

The Im-dugud panel was not alone of its kind in the decoration of Nin-khursag's temple. Standing outside on some part of the platform were several small statues of standing bulls, with their heads turned outwards as in the case of the stags. These, however, were made in the full round, not as parts of a relief. They stood on their own legs which were fixed into the ground, or a plank, by spikes, and were made in exactly the same way as the Im-dugud panel, a wooden core being coated with bitumen and sheet copper hammered to the shape all over, its edges nailed down. With their fine heads and horns they make a brave appearance despite some rather grotesque details in the body. As well as these detached figures there was a narrow frieze of copper-covered reliefs of young bulls or cows, which ran along the façade of the building some distance above the ground. These were mounted upon planks, and finished in the way already described, the head, of hollow-cast copper, being again turned outwards from the surface of the relief. One of the fore-legs is bent so as to set the hoof upon the ground ; the animals are thus in the act of rising, just as they appear

also upon the celebrated silver vase of Entemena from Lagash. Several of the heads of these bulls were found broken from the frieze, and one had the peculiarity of a moon-crescent mark upon its forehead, a significant feature for interpreting the meaning of these reliefs. For it was not only bulls which stood outside the temple. There were found the heads of four great lions and two of smaller size, some of which had once been attached to the fore-part, at least, of a body. These heads were intended to have a ferocious appearance, the mane and whiskers being accentuated by engraving, and the eyes made separately with three pieces of different colours, red sandstone for the pupils, shell for the eyeballs, and blue schist for the lids, all fitting accurately into each other. Finally a red jasper pebble was inset for the tongue and two engraved shell plates flanked it as the grinning teeth. The reason for this savage appearance, so distinct from the quiet aspect of the bulls, will be seen later. To conclude the list of animals, represented in this peculiar technique of cast or hammered copper over a wood and bitumen core, there were two heads of some cat-like creatures, perhaps leopards, of less fearsome mien than the lions, since their eyes are simply worked in the metal, and they have no protruding tongues.

Somewhere else round the outside of the wall, perhaps higher than the continuous line of bulls in the copper relief, ran another frieze in a different style. The basis of this was indeed the same; it was essentially a line of planks fixed to the wall

with the outer face decorated, but this time the medium was different. Only the edges of the planks were covered by a narrow beading of copper, but the whole space between these was filled by a black composition of bitumen into which were fixed small figures cut in outline, with the internal details filled in by carving. Shell or limestone was the material of the figures, and they were fixed in by small clamps of copper wire which held them at the back. The resulting appearance is striking in contrast with the black background, but it is, of course, possible that the figures were originally coloured. In places the continuity of this frieze seems to have been broken by small plaques of sculptured limestone, with reliefs executed in the ordinary way. Many disjointed pieces of the applied figures were found, but the connected sections displayed only two scenes. Three or four longish portions had upon them processions of bulls (pl. 15), all in the same attitude, walking towards the right; as many as six animals were found on one section, and doubtless there had originally been a very long line. These bulls were carved in shell, out of several pieces each, since no single shell could yield a flat piece large enough for the whole figure (about 5 ins. long), and these fragments, most carefully fitted together, were each secured to the backing by their own little loops of copper wire. The carving of these shell figures is very finished; the stronger outlines of limbs and muscles are marked by incised lines, but the natural curves of the body are rendered by a

delicate control of the relief. With so much refinement in the individual figures it is a pity that the whole scene has no variety, for the repetition of animals, as like each other as the sculptor could make them, makes the composition lifeless despite the striking contrast which the materials assured.

The second scene is of immensely greater interest as a whole although the detail is less pleasing. In the middle is a cattle pen or byre made of standing reeds held together by plaited bands of rope. A narrow doorway flanked by stout posts with curious semicircular projections towards the top, and a crescent-shaped lintel, lets out two calves, whose foreparts are seen as they turn one to each side. Outside this byre, on the right, are two similar groups each constituted by a cow, her calf, and a man crouching behind as he milks the cow into a tall vessel. His position is surprising, for he is actually under the cow's tail, yet other examples prove that this is not merely an artistic convention but the actual practice of the Sumerian cow-men, and in fact milking from behind is still the custom of certain tribes in that country. The calves stand facing the cows; round their necks they have halters, and these are brought forward, passed round the muzzle, and then tied to the mother-cow, the object being to prevent the calves from sucking. On the left of the byre is a complementary scene of the preparation of this milk by four men, who dip it from a high pointed jar, pass it through a strainer

into a pail from which it is transferred to a very rotund pot with a narrow mouth which the last man holds between his knees as he sits upon a stool. The process thus depicted is evidently the making of butter, doubtless to be turned into the *samn* or clarified butter which has always been a staple of diet in the East.* Why so commonplace, and almost domestic, an incident should be thus elaborately illustrated upon the walls of a temple will be seen later. Meantime, there remain one or two more prominent objects from the ruins to be mentioned, especially a number of gaily-coloured columns formed of palm-logs, coated (like the cores of the animal figures) with bitumen into which were stuck, by the familiar loops of copper wire, countless triangular or lozenge-shaped tesserae of red sandstone, mother-of-pearl, or black shale. The triangles, closely fitted together, covered most of the surface, while the smaller lozenge pieces were put together as broad horizontal bands, which divided the height of the column into sections, the whole producing an effect of astonishing

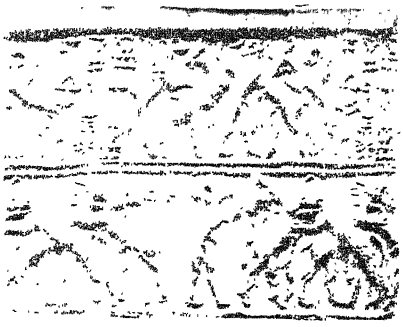
* All the circumstances of this relief can be illustrated from the modern life of the Arabs. Two passages may be quoted from Doughty's *Arabia Deserta :*

Vol. I, p. 325.—" A milch-cow with the calf is milked only at evening. Her udder has four teats which the southern nomads divide thus : two they tie up with a worsted twine and wooden pegs, for themselves, the other they leave to the suckling."

Vol. II, p. 67.—" When the morning rose the women milked their small cattle ; and we sat on whilst the old housewife rocked her blown-up milk-skin upon her knees till the butter came ; they find it in a clot at the mouth of the semîly. I soon saw that little butter seething on the fire to be turned into samn. . . . They throw in now a little meal, which brings down the milkiness ; and the samn or clarified butter may be poured off."

brilliance. Corresponding with these were other columns overlaid with copper plates nailed down at the edges, and a number of thinner poles treated in the same way, the thicker being doubtless actual columns and the thinner roofing-beams which stretched from wall to wall and supported the roof of beaten mud laid upon rush mats spread over the beams in exactly the same way as it is done to this day.

So much description of the principal remains found at al-'Ubaid, summary as it is, would be of little use if they were to be regarded only as separate items. It would, indeed, have been surprising enough to discover the unexpected excellence of their craftsmanship, the mere artistic quality of these products of the earliest historical age in Sumer. That a long development lay behind them, upon which history has but the feeblest grasp, must be manifest, and certainly, if the splendid gold-work from the tombs described above is to be placed in time before the First Dynasty, there is nothing among the treasures of Nin-khursag which need even suggest a culmination of art under A-anni-padda. But, fortunately, the finding of all these things together can be at least partly explained, and that not only as regards their relative combination in the building, but also in respect of their significance; all of these works belonged to one temple, and many of them owed their being to the character of the deity worshipped there. From the position in which some of them lay with relation to the main steps up to the



(*a*)



(*b*)

WRITING OF THE FIRST DYNASTY OF UR :

(*a*) Cylinder-seal of the wife of Mes-anni-padda
(After *Antiquaries' Journal*, VIII, pl. XI)

(*b*) Foundation-tablet of the temple at al-'Ubaid,

platform it was clear that several of the most imposing features were grouped about the main entrance. Thus the variegated columns had flanked the door, the copper-coated ones had perhaps supported a porch over it. No more probable site than over the lintel of the door can be suggested for the great relief of the eagle and stags, for this was found where it had fallen over the platform-edge just beside the steps. Some other objects which evidently belonged there were the foreparts and heads of lions, and perhaps some of the bull statues, since these beasts were the invariable occupants of entrances to sacred buildings and palaces, being endowed by magical means with the power of forbidding passage to demons and malevolent powers which might seek to lodge within and assail the inhabitants. The familiar stone lions and winged bulls from the Assyrian palaces were made for the same purpose and set in the same position, in obedience to a superstition as powerful in the seventh as it must have been in the thirtieth century.* Many of the copper figures, and of the reliefs in stone and bitumen, were found, however, in places remote from the entrance, but yet in conditions which showed something of their arrangement in the original building. Among the fallen masses of the walls were found many peg-like ornaments of baked clay, expanding at the top to a shallow cup with wavy edges. Fixed down into the middle of it was a rounded piece of red sandstone with

* See also above, p. 34 ff.

domed top, and then, radiating outwards from this, and laid upon the top of the clay peg were shaped petals, red, white, and black, in a thick bed of bitumen, the whole thus forming an artificial flower upon a tapering stalk. Ornaments like this were at all times used in Babylonia as a wall-decoration, and it is, on the whole, most likely that these had their "stems" embedded in the walls, and bespangled the surface with their gaily-coloured heads. Because of certain nicks which are found upon the stalks it has also been thought that these "flowers" were supported by wires, and stood in the likeness of natural flowers with their heads upwards. If this were so, it would have needed only the builder's inscription upon them to answer the riddle of Menalcas:

> Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
> Nascantur flores.

Some later ornaments of this kind have indeed the names of kings upon them, but they have lost their flower-like form. Above these "flowers," in any case, lay the fallen masses of the walls where they had crashed outwards and over the edge of the platform, and upon the under-side of these lay the bands of decoration that had once run along their outward faces. Nearest to the platform, and therefore standing nearest the bottom of the wall, were the figures of bulls in the full round. These had staples under each hoof and must therefore have stood free upon a base; it is most likely that they actually occupied the ledge of the platform,

between its brink and the wall of the temple proper. Somewhat higher ran the frieze of bull-panels, with the animals couchant and depicted in high relief. This frieze was continuous, for certain of the figures were found still connected at each end; the method of its fixing into the wall was perfectly clear from the remains. Stout rings of copper rod had passed through the panels at intervals, and projected behind into the brick-work, where they had been secured by thick wooden pegs through the rings, the whole fastening being then built in by laying the next courses of bricks, that is, the frieze had been prepared and fixed in its place when the wall reached the required height, at an early stage in the building. Exactly the same was done for the one, or perhaps two, similar friezes which stood higher up than the bull-panels. The next one above seems to have been that of the stone (or shell) and bitumen inlays, the principal members of which, so far as recovered, were the dairying scene and the procession of bulls. Above this again there may have been another which comprised only identical figures of ducks (?) rather roughly worked in limestone and laid upon the same bitumen background. Something of the original appearance of the temple, though little of its splendour, can thus be traced even among its ruins. Occupying one corner of a spacious court which was formed by the top of a high platform with recessed brickwork sides, and approached from ground level by a flight of stone steps, the building presented a lavishly-decorated face

towards the ascent. On all its other sides, to judge by the complete absence of remains, the walls were unrelieved by any kind of applied ornament, except possibly a smaller door with some slenderer columns of multi-coloured tesserae. But the richness of the south-east wall, when all the new copper was glancing under the sun, outdazzling the gay columns and the painted porch, must have been imposing, a magnificence in keeping with the gaudy splendour which the early tombs in the city have revealed.

If the wealth and craftsmanship lavished upon this suburban shrine need no more explanation than the might of its builder, the character of its decoration is less self-evidently fitting. In particular, the endless repetition of bull and cow figures is its most noticeable feature; in copper and stone, in relief and in the round, these animals are everywhere. The reason for this is in the nature of the deity which dwelt there, known from the foundation-tablet to have been the goddess Ninkhursag. Though her name, which signifies "Lady of the Mountain," is not easy to connect with her attributes, yet the chief of those attributes are known, and it is these which account for the presence of the cows and bulls. She was, in general, the mother-goddess. One of the beliefs current as to the beginning of the world was that she had aided the three greatest gods, Anu, Enlil, and Enki, in the creation of man. It was said that she moulded out of clay seven figures each of men and women, and these were brought to life

by the potent incantations of Enki. Already "mother of the gods," she thus became the first mother of men, and her influence was seen in the birth of every generation. But it was, of course, in the creation of kings that her activity was chiefly recognized; at all times kings boast themselves her children, or that they were fashioned in the womb by her, praying to her that she may withdraw herself from their enemies, so that all birth may cease in hostile lands. Hardly any of the early rulers fail to include among their titles "fed with the holy milk of Nin-khursag," and it is this conception of the goddess as mother and nurse which accounts for the cows upon her temple. There can, in fact, be little doubt that Nin-khursag, like her Egyptian counterpart Hathor, was actually depicted in the form of a cow, and the cow was in any case her constant symbol. It is known that at Lagash this goddess had a large cattle-farm outside the city, just as her temple is situated at Ur, and it cannot be doubted that al-'Ubaid was once the centre of pastures in which the sacred herds were grazed, their divine mistress dwelling in the midst. The dairying-scene has preserved, therefore, to a remote future age an incident from the daily life of five thousand years ago, but it must not be supposed that the artist worked for the mere delight of pourtraying his rustic fellows about their work. Like every other element in the decoration this also has a religious meaning; it is the preparation of the "holy milk of Nin-khursag" destined for the nourishment of

kings and priests, drawn from the sacred cattle, filtered and turned into butter by the servitors of the temple.

The bulls, of course, have their place as the counterpart of the cows, but in this also there is doubtless a more direct religious allusion. Over the door of the byre in the dairy scene is a lintel in form of a crescent, and one of the heads from the copper relief frieze has upon its forehead a crescent blaze, unmistakably an allusion to the Moon-god of the neighbouring city, who, in turn, is often called a "bull" in the religious literature. Thus the natural mating of the cattle upon the farm appeared as only the manifestation (rather than the symbol) of the mythical union of god and goddess, from which all earthly life was held to spring, as the increase of the herds from the individual pairs of cows and bulls. Once in the year, perhaps oftener, the goddess would set out from al-'Ubaid for her wedding. She would emerge in procession from her dwelling, borne on her priests' shoulders, with attendant gods to right and left and behind her, a sacred emblem going before, and a courier leading to clear the way. At the canal she was taken aboard a boat, and thus floated down, where the track of the stream can still be seen, past the south-west front of the ziggurrat at Ur. In the city she was ceremonially received by the king and another procession, bringing forward her divine consort. The two were then taken into their shrine together while sacrifices and chants proceeded outside; upon these



Trachyte figure of a man in a squatting attitude, probably a certain Kur-lil, "keeper of the granary at Erech"; from the temple at al-'Ubaid (see pp. 49ff)
(After *al-'Ubaid*, pl. IX)

sacred nuptials all life and increase was held to depend.

One other article in the beliefs connected with this goddess must find here at least a brief mention, because it seems to explain why al-'Ubaid was the centre of a great number of burials. Not only in the small mound which yielded the painted pottery, but in several other places hard by, the soil was found to be full of ancient graves. This is not to be understood simply by the fact that al-'Ubaid lies west of the city, and that the Babylonians, like the Egyptians, regarded the land of sunset as the place of the dead. It is, indeed, quite likely that this idea partly accounted for the westerly situation of Nin-khursag's dwelling, for there was an essential connexion between her and death. As the universal source of life her power was supposed to extend beyond a single birth for each of her children, and hence she reckoned among her names this also of " Quickener of the dead." Legends told how she penetrated each year into the place of the dead to win back from the hand of the infernal queen the young god Tammuz, whose death had deprived the earth of all increase. In such wise might her annual benefit, or her special favour, regain the life of any who were buried in her shadow, and hence the flocking of the dead in cemeteries all about her rural sanctuary.

Three kings after A-anni-padda completed the First Dynasty of Ur. Meskem-Nannar, his successor, is called the son of Mes-anni-padda by the

king-list, but in the history of the Tummal at Nippur he is the son of "Annani," who seems to be A-anni-padda, as explained above. Since he reigned thirty-six years it is much more likely that he was, in fact, the son of A-anni-padda, his paternity being altered in the king-list when A-anni-padda's name was lost. Of his acts nothing is known except his completion of the third rebuilding of the Tummal, which his father had begun, nor has any monument bearing his name as yet been found. After him Elulu and Balulu, who are not stated to have belonged to the same family, ruled for twenty-five and thirty-six years. They are mere names, and then comes the customary formula: "Ur was smitten with arms, and its kingdom passed to Awan." Therewith the king-list plunges again out of its brief interval of illumination into dark tradition. A succession of dynasties follows in various cities up and down the land, but the lengths of their supremacies and of many individual reigns are visibly exaggerated. Moreover, if the total number of years ascribed to the dynasties in this early part of the list be added together an almost astronomical figure is obtained which cannot be seriously considered. For example, the eleven dynasties, which are given as intervening between Balulu and Sargon of Agade, account for more than five thousand years! It is, however, perfectly certain that the same number of hundreds as the list allows thousands would be a much nearer estimate of that time.

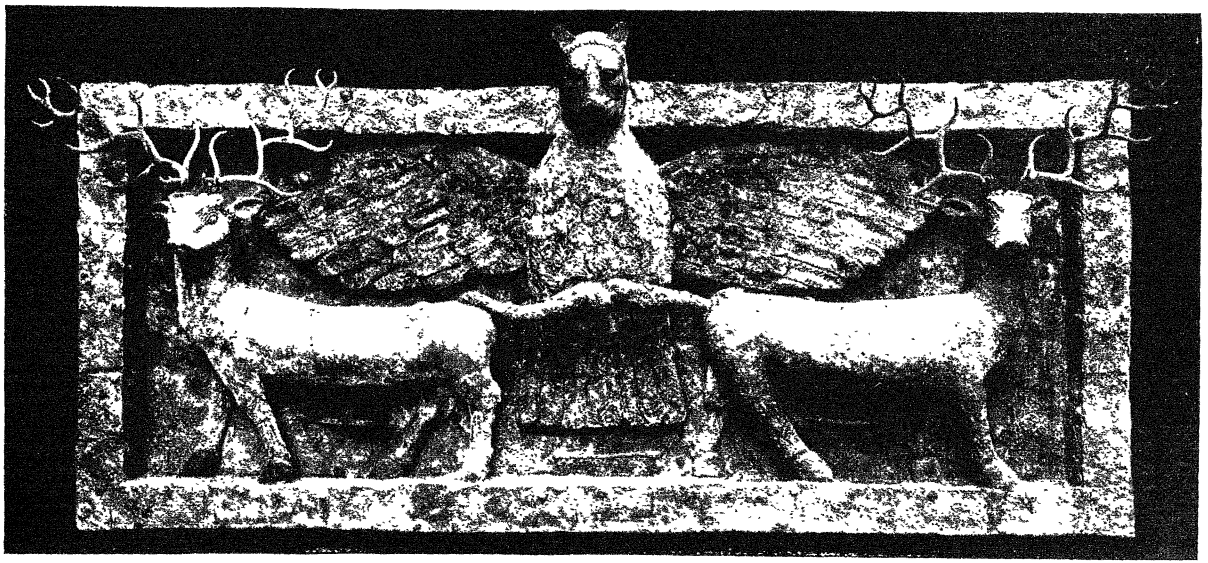
Before adducing the reasons for this confidence, however, it will be worth while to suggest the factors which have vitiated the formal accuracy of the king-list. There is no reasonable doubt that, in the main, it presents a true summary of the order of events in the early kingdoms of Sumer; it doubtless preserves substantially the order in which cities rose to predominance, and the names of many of their most celebrated rulers. But it was drawn up under the kings of Isin, who supplanted the Third Dynasty of Ur, and therefore belongs to the turn of the third and the second millennia. No trace of any earlier copies than this has ever been discovered, nor is it in the least likely that further research will supply them, for the complete absence of any written literary work, except dedications, before the Isin period is a highly remarkable feature of Babylonian cultural history. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the tale of the ancient kingdoms and rulers, like a great deal else of the native learning, was handed down by oral tradition, and was not committed to writing until a new tongue, the Akkadian speech of the Semites, became markedly predominant, and required the traditions, no longer readily memorized in their now alien form, to be fixed upon clay tablets. From this precarious transmission the history of the old hegemonies had visibly suffered much. Not only was the memory of the earliest passages blurred by distance and eked out by legends mingling gods and men, but patriarchal ages were assigned to the heroes of

earliest recollection, with the effect of producing a totally fantastic chronology. But into this process there entered another factor, which, if it did not deceive the Sumerian wise men, has proved very misleading to modern inquirers. Each dynasty is formally represented as the successor of the preceding; one city is overthrown and another takes its place. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that the duration of the two kingdoms was the total of their two rules, and it is this presumption which gives, for example, the impossible interval of five thousand years between Balulu and Sargon, already alluded to. It is evident, then, either that such a conclusion was not intended, but is conveyed to us only by a literary awkwardness, or, if intended, that it is quite inadmissible. The solution of this difficulty is supplied by certain later passages of the list which emerge into history known from exterior sources, where it is at once seen that certain dynasties noted in the list were indeed ruling in the land, but at the same time, not consecutively. Whether one or the other among them enjoyed a formal precedence it is not necessary here to inquire; these features of the list having been observed, it remains to consider what actual place in history must be assigned to the First Dynasty of Ur, since this cannot be computed from the actual figures given in the list of kings.

It is obvious that the answer to this question must be sought by comparison of the actual remains of the First Dynasty of Ur with any

similar class of equally material things to which an approximate place can be assigned in Sumerian history. Under this head any kind of product may be included, but here, as elsewhere, an especially valuable guide is found in the form of the writing. If, therefore, previous research has made known, in any historical context, works of art resembling those of al-'Ubaid, and particularly inscriptions in a writing markedly like that of A-anni-padda, there will be the strongest presumption that the First Dynasty flourished not very much before or after the same time. Happily, the material of comparison in this case is the celebrated relics which first really opened the ancient Sumerian civilization to the modern world. At Telloh, the site of the city of Lagash, French excavators have been busy for many seasons since 1877 in bringing to light a series of monuments, in stone, metal, and clay, which belonged mainly to two periods. The later was the age of Gudea, who reigned in the interval between the fall of Agade and the rise of the Third Ur Dynasty; this is very sharply distinguished from the earlier by the style of its art. The early monuments were dated by their copious inscriptions to a line of kings founded by one Ur-Nina, who left his kingdom to at least four generations of his sons, after which it was continued by somewhat obscure successors, and ended with the deposition of Urukagina at the hands of a neighbouring governor, Lugal-zaggisi of Umma and Erech. This line of rulers, though evidently of great power and wealth, is completely

ignored in the king-list; they never achieved the formal distinction of "kingship" over the land, although it may well be surmised that several kingdoms which are admitted to the record never enjoyed nearly so much real supremacy as Lagash in her most prosperous days. But the dynasty of Ur-Nina has, for us, a more valuable distinction than a place in the somewhat fallacious scheme of the royal list. Its final extinction by Lugal-zaggisi, who is known to have been an older contemporary of Sargon himself, gives it a definite setting in objective history,—it perished just before the rise of the great conqueror. There is, indeed, a serious disadvantage in its omission from the record in that its total length remains unknown, nor can this be computed by generations, since these cannot be followed after the fourth descendant of the founder. Nevertheless, hereby Ur-Nina and his sons have at least one foot upon solid ground of history. The calculation of their actual date depends upon a multitude of considerations which it would not be proper to discuss here, and the result is, of course, approximate to the extent of perhaps a century on either side, but Ur-Nina is generally held to have lived in the years between 3000 and 2900 B.C. The importance of all this to the question at present in hand is, that there is so notable a likeness between the art and the writing of Lagash under Ur-Nina and his sons, and of Ur under the First Dynasty, that it is impossible to suppose them very widely divided in time. This likeness can be traced in a number of



Great copper relief-panel, representing a mythical lion-headed eagle clutching the hindquarters of two stags: from the temple at al-'Ubaid (see pp. 50ff) (After *al-'Ubaid*, pl. VI)

PLATE XIV

details, both of matter, subject, and manner, in the relics that have been recovered from the two cities. In the writing comparisons of some exactness can be made, and several tests give a remarkably consistent result. But perhaps the general effect of the whole body of monuments from both sites is the more impressive. No one who is acquainted with both can fail to be struck by their great resemblance, or can doubt that both were produced under the same influences, with the same materials and processes, and at very much the same time. Some indications of the script, however, may be taken to suggest a slight precedence of the First Dynasty of Ur over the early kings of Lagash.

The most warlike and energetic of these kings was Eannatum, the grandson of Ur-Nina, whose inscriptions, especially that engraved upon the celebrated "Stele of the Vultures," give much information about his military achievements. Though their course is not easy to follow in order, it is clear that, beginning with a triumph over the neighbouring city of Umma in a boundary-war, he greatly extended his conquests so as to be for some time in control of all the south country up to the city of Kish in the north, and even claimed to have defeated the Elamites. If such indeed was his success, the disregard of his city by the king-list is the more remarkable. But what is most to the present purpose is, that Eannatum speaks in several places of his conquest of Ur, together with Erech and another city not far away. Seeing,

therefore, that the destruction of the temple at al-'Ubaid was certainly violent and the work of an enemy, it is natural to ask whether these two events may be connected; was it Eannatum who overthrew the walls of Nin-khursag's rustic dwelling? If the question be referred to the king-list this supposition must undoubtedly be denied, since Eannatum should, by reckoning back from Urukagina, have been reigning at Lagash as a vassal of the Maer or of the Akshak dynasties which are placed almost immediately after the Second Dynasty of Ur. If then it is assumed, here as elsewhere, that several of these kingdoms were for the most part contemporary, Eannatum could very well be brought into contact with Ur in the days of its Second Dynasty. And this, indeed, may prove to be the fact. Unfortunately, however, nothing at all is at present known about the Second Dynasty itself, or about the rulers of Maer and Akshak, except what is to be gathered from the list itself. Material remains of their period are completely lacking, and it is therefore impossible to say whether their art and writing were such as might have been compared with those of Eannatum. In favour of a different conclusion stands the obvious likeness which even a casual eye must observe in the craftsmanship of early Lagash and of Ur under the First Dynasty, which suggests something very near contemporaneity of the two. It is true, indeed, that, despite the inflated figures of the king-list, the actual interval between the First and Second

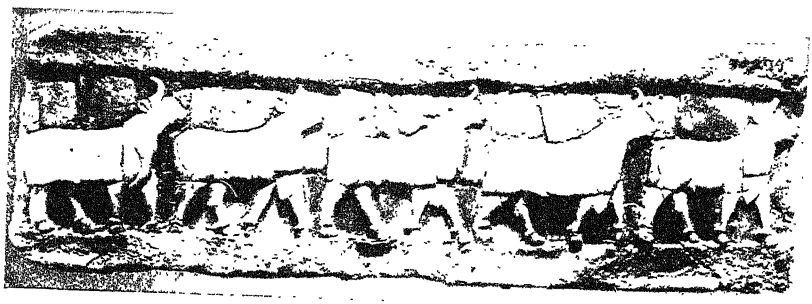
Dynasties of Ur cannot have been immense, and therefore styles need not be supposed to have changed very greatly. In that case, the Second Dynasty might still have been decorating its palaces and temples with works hardly distinguishable from those of A-anni-padda, and consequently there would be no necessity to place Eannatum earlier. But until the Second Dynasty becomes something more than a name its true position cannot be estimated, and, since a verdict must be delivered, it seems safer to decide provisionally for the First Dynasty as the victim of Eannatum's assault. If, then, the last king, Balulu, thus ended his thirty-six years of reign, A-anni-padda was reigning some 120 years before one of the earlier years of Eannatum, who was the grandson of Ur-Nina, founder of his line at Lagash. Thus A-anni-padda belonged to the second generation before Ur-Nina, and, if the latter is to be placed between 3000 and 2900 B.C., it would follow that A-anni-padda built his temple at al-'Ubaid in the last century of the fourth millennium, perhaps at the very end of that epoch. It is only, at the most, a probable conclusion, and a vague date, but it is the best that present knowledge allows. That the future will bring greater precision may almost be taken for granted, in this as in every dark question of Babylonian studies.

## CHAPTER III

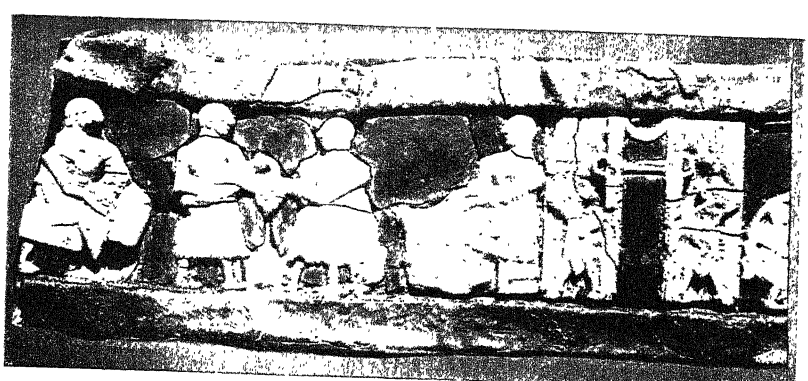
# BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THIRD DYNASTIES

IF Eannatum of Lagash was actually the destroyer of the First Dynasty, as the preceding chapter has suggested, room must be found in a brief space for much that is alleged to have taken place before Ur was again ruled by her own kings. The period intervening before and after the Second Dynasty is, however, one of almost complete obscurity. The only authority for these years is the king-list, and unfortunately it is almost useless for the construction of an ordered history. The First Dynasty is said to have been subverted by Awan, a city east of the Tigris and probably not far from Susa, but as yet undiscovered. Then follow in order dynasties of Kish (as usual, at this centre, of enormous length), Hamazi, and Erech, and then the Second Dynasty of Ur. Of all these not a single fact is known, not even of the Ur kingdom; excavation has completely failed, so far, to find any trace of it, unless it be the second building at al-'Ubaid, already mentioned. But that also is a mere conjecture.

Among the relics obtained by systematic or



(*a*)



(*b*)

INLAY PANELS WITH COPPER EDGES, AND FIGURES OF SHELL OR LIMESTONE AGAINST A BLACK BACKGROUND

(*a*) A procession of bulls;

(*b*) Men preparing butter, outside a cow-byre. From al-'Ubaid (see pp. 55ff)
(After *al-'Ubaid*, pll. XXXI, XXXII)

promiscuous digging at other sites there occur a few inscriptions of early "kings" belonging to divers cities, recording perhaps a single warlike or pious act, but hardly one of these is known to the eclectic tradition which has formed the king-list, and there is consequently nothing at all to tell in what relation these rulers stood to others whom the list chose to recognize. In short, that document can at this point be perused with interest, but without much confidence. So abundant are the reasons for discounting its appearance of presenting a strict chronological table that it would perhaps be sufficient to confess the existence, about this time, of more or less powerful ruling houses at Kish and Erech in the west, and at Awan and Hamazi in the east. Of their political, and even of their chronological, relations it would be imprudent to hazard a guess, though they may have flourished roughly in the order which the list assigns to them. In the midst of these stands the family of Ur-Nina and the kingdom of Lagash, the only island of tolerably firm foothold in an ocean of doubt. Not even from the inscriptions of Eannatum, however, can anything but a deceptive light be thrown upon contemporary affairs, for the kings of Kish and Akshak whom he defeated are unknown to the formal tradition. Nevertheless, it is Lagash alone which preserves some degree of continuity to bridge the generations which intervene before the road of history can be struck again. That continuity is, indeed, of the most tenuous kind, for

the great governors, after Enannatum II, are succeeded by an uncertain number of very minor figures, whose names are preserved only by the datings of temple-accounts; the last of them was Urukagina, a prince of more justice than worldly wisdom, who fell to an external conqueror indeed, but not, probably, without the secret triumph of once-privileged subjects, whom his over-nice scruples had baulked of their wonted perquisites. Purely as a landmark in time the greatest importance of Urukagina is that his fall re-establishes, or rather, establishes for the first time beyond question, contact between objective history and the king-list. Urukagina of Lagash was overthrown by Lugal-zaggisi of Erech, as contemporary inscriptions relate, and Lugal-zaggisi is himself the "Third Dynasty" of Erech. In this way, then, Lagash is the link which joins the First Dynasty of Ur to the age of Sargon, who, as it will appear, was in turn the conqueror of Lugal-zaggisi, and from Sargon downwards the course of history, though not without rapids, has no subterranean disappearances.

It is an ungrateful but necessary task to look backwards again and observe what separates the First Dynasty of Ur from the firm ground here reached. There lies between a welter of shadowy kingdoms (among which even a few individual figures are possibly to be descried), insecurely spanned by a line of rulers who maintained an apparently unbroken succession over a considerable, though uncertain, number of years in a

city never officially recognized as the seat of sovereignty. Indistinguishable in this limbo lies the Second Dynasty of Ur, a mere phantom without content in time, deeds, or persons, since, as though mischance were determined to spare it nothing, the very names of its kings, though once remembered, are no longer preserved.* That nothing may be wanting to understand how gross is the darkness that still hides these years, let it be repeated that even the chronological contacts between Lagash and the First and Second Dynasties of Ur have been hitherto adjusted only by inference from the writing and from the art. The opinion that it was the First Dynasty which was subverted by Eannatum's conquest has been adopted only because it seemed best to square with known material facts; there is no strictly historical evidence for it. So far as the latter is concerned, Eannatum may as well have fought against the Second Dynasty, or against some local power not entitled to the style of royalty at all.

From this somewhat depressing retrospect it is a relief to turn away and glance even at the very few and poor scraps of information that relate to Ur between the First Dynasty and the age of Sargon. After his annexation of the city, which presumably happened in the early years of his reign, Eannatum was not unmindful of its cults; he offered two victims to the Moon-god,

* It is possible, though a simple conjecture, that two of these were Lugal-ki-gub-ni-lakh and Lugal-kisal-si, who claim lordship over Erech and Ur in their inscriptions which were found at Nippur.

whom he invokes in his "Stele of the Vultures," as witness of the solemn imprecations he denounced against the neighbouring city of Umma, which he had defeated in a boundary war. Of his subsequent dealings with Ur nothing whatever is known. At Lagash he was succeeded, after a presumably long, and certainly prosperous reign, by his brother Enannatum I, a short-lived ruler, who has nevertheless left a sufficient memorial of himself at Ur to show that the city remained in the possession of his line. An insignificant stump of a clay-cone, found just below the surface in an outlying part of the site, still bears his name, and the mention of two shrines (probably not in Ur) which he restored. Upon the shoulder of Entemena's statue, to be mentioned forthwith, is engraved a record of lands which Enannatum devised to the god Enlil, but in this case too there is no likelihood that these lands belonged to the territory of Ur. At home Enannatum had much ado to repel a new attack from the jealous governor of Umma. His son and successor, Entemena, relates this fresh invasion,[11] and significantly contents himself with saying that Enannatum "fought with" the men of Umma, perhaps leaving it to be inferred that his father was hard pressed, though it may, indeed, be no more than the common vanity of seeking to heighten the effect of the victory which he claims for himself. Entemena left at Ur a very notable monument of his lordship over that city in the well-preserved, though headless, diorite statue (pl. 16) of himself

which was found in the ruins of the gate-house beside the entrance which Nabonidus made through the wall of the sacred enclosure, directly under the south-west face of the ziggurrat. The heavy and stunted figure, which stands about 2 feet 6 inches high without the head, does not necessarily mean that Entemena was in fact such a corpulent dwarf. These are the characteristics of the archaic period of sculpture, for the statue of Entemena is probably the earliest standing figure in the round which has yet been recovered; the well-known Lugal-da-lu of Adab may be rather later, and its softer limestone has given the sculptor opportunity for more refinement. Entemena wears the ordinary dress of kings at this early period, the full skirt of sheepskin suspended from the waist, leaving the upper part of the body and the arms bare. His hands are clasped, right held in left, with the peculiar gesture of prayer, the statue being designed to stand continually before a god, and there to impersonate the king, making constant prayer on his behalf. Over the right upper arm, and across the back of the shoulders, is engraved an inscription in six columns. The bulk of it enumerates pious works carried out in the temples of Lagash, the two short columns being devoted to particulars of a grant of lands made by the king and his father Enannatum to the god Enlil. In all this one seeks in vain any mention of Ur. There is none; the shrines and the lands are all in, or hard by, the monarch's own city of Lagash.

The presence of the statue at Ur thus becomes enigmatical. For it does not seem very likely that Entemena would have set it up in a temple at Ur without some record of benefactions to the god whom it was to address, and yet the smiting off its head proves that it had been a hated symbol to some one who later came into possession of the city. Again, it is not very likely that any king of Ur troubled to bring such a relic home from a successful attack upon Lagash. However this may be, the ancient and headless image was evidently re-erected by Nabonidus in his new gate-house. The fracture at the neck is smooth worn as though it had been long rubbed by hands or brushed by garments. Nabonidus does indeed seem to have made something of a collection of antiquities at Ur, and this was perhaps one of his treasures; but it is equally open to suppose that the venerable figure was placed in the gate for the same purpose as the lions, dogs, and mystic "sages," to secure the entrance against malignant spirits.

Entemena reigned some twenty years at Lagash, and was succeeded by his son, Enannatum II, of whom nothing much is known. He was the last of the Ur-Nina line, and under him the power of his city doubtless declined, for nothing more is heard of wars and foreign conquest until Lagash itself became the victim first of its old rival Umma and soon after of a greater conqueror. Meantime utter silence descends upon Ur, though it is not impossible that at least a formal Lagashite supremacy



HEADLESS STATUE OF ENTEMENA, GOVERNOR OF LAGASH, FOUND AT UR (p. 80) (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, III, pl. XXXI)

remained there, since later rulers of Lagash, Ur-Bau and Gudea, have left marks of their activity in building temples and appointing priests at Ur, which must argue secular control of the place. If such a sovereignty there was, we must suppose it to have been interrupted by the rise of the Second Dynasty, which elusive entity is given four kings, and a total duration of 108 years, by the list, figures which in themselves have no unlikelihood. A much more difficult, indeed unanswerable, question is to estimate the time which separated the Second Dynasty from the First: it is, in fact, a question which were best declined. For even could it be asserted with confidence (whereas it can only be suggested with reserve) that Eannatum overthrew the First Dynasty and Lugal-zaggisi put an end to the Second, it would still be quite uncertain what time intervened between these two events, since neither the number nor the regnal years of the Lagashites are known to history. It would be as easy as it would be groundless to postulate some round number, but there is little profit in such guesses. One condition, however, must govern the dating of this period if the second of the above suggestions is to be adopted. Since the date of Lugal-zaggisi may be fixed, with a fairly liberal allowance on either side, at about 2550 B.C., that also would mark the end of the Second Dynasty, which must, in that case, with its 108 years of rule, have begun about 2650 B.C. How long before that the First Dynasty fell is entirely uncertain. The interval

between the "red brick" and the "grey brick" buildings at al-'Ubaid does not seem to have been long, but that is of doubtful relevance, as the "grey brick" is only conjectured to be the work of the Second Dynasty. But it grows wearisome to walk on still in darkness, and to insist further upon these negations.

"The men of Umma," exclaims the indignant recorder of their bloody and pillaging triumph, "after Lagash had been stormed, committed trespass against the god Ningirsu. Therefore the victory which came unto them shall be cut short. In Urukagina, king of Lagash, there is no trespass. But for Lugal-zaggisi, governor of Umma, may his goddess Nisaba lay this trespass upon his neck." [12] Six years, it seems, were to fulfil the reign of Urukagina, who, engrossed in his religious buildings and in his championship of the poor, perhaps found himself, like "Sethos" of Egypt, whose story is told by Herodotus, deserted in the hour of need by the powerful and wealthy who would have resented the interference as much as they scorned the eccentricity of the *ami du peuple*. His conqueror, Lugal-zaggisi, finds a place in the king-list as the Third Dynasty of Erech, with a reign of twenty-five years. It is fairly certain that he attained this kingdom by force of arms, for he was the son of Ukush, governor of Umma, and it may be taken for granted that Lugal-zaggisi, succeeding to that minor principate, began a career of conquest which was to make him master of Lagash (captured while yet he was only governor of Umma), then of Erech,

and finally of an extensive dominion, for he claims that the god Enlil had "made straight the road for him from the Lower Sea, the Tigris and Euphrates, even to the Upper Sea," [13] that is, from the Persian Gulf probably to the Mediterranean. Apart from this vague pretension, he is known to have been master of all the most important cities, for his inscription celebrates the prosperity which he bestowed upon Erech, Larsa, Umma, and Ur itself, which seems, indeed, to have been the second in importance of all his possessions. "He uplifted the head of Ur to heaven as it were a bull," and upon the base of his statue in the temple at Nippur he called himself "lord of the land of Erech, and king of the land of Ur." It may be considered certain that he became king of Ur, as of Erech, by fighting; whether, as already suggested, by ousting the Second Dynasty there is nothing to show. In any case the city must have been subject to him for the greater part of the twenty-five years which are allotted to his reign. If the rule of Lugal-zaggisi was as beneficent as he claims, they were years of uneventful prosperity. Nothing, at least, is recorded of them except the disaster which brought them to an end.

The inscription upon Lugal-zaggisi's statue-base at Nippur is chiefly notable for being written in the Semitic language (Akkadian), of which it is one of the earliest monuments. It displays, as if by a slight anticipation, all the marks of that language, and the method of writing it, seen in the inscriptions of the impending dynasty of Agade.

The method is awkward in the extreme; the scribes are little accustomed to a full phonetic use of the signs, and wherever possible they write the Sumerian "ideograph," though reading it by its Akkadian equivalent. The script, invented by Sumerians for their own language, is in fact here making its first essays in adaptation to a foreign tongue, a process which later generations were to apply from Elam to Asia Minor, and from Egypt to Armenia with such remarkable success. A Semitic language was thus for the first time written, and so became known to the learned in general, and to all who could read, as the "speech of Agade" or Akkadian, because it was the language of the conquering followers of Sargon and of his successors in the dynasty of Agade. This name prevailed, though it cannot have been the native Semitic name for their speech originally, because it was Sargon himself who made Agade his capital, and it is obvious that the language must have been in use long before this merely political incident had caused his Semitic armies to be described as "Akkadians." But as the Semites appear to have taken over every other single element of culture from the Sumerians, their docility went even so far as to accept the Sumerian name for their own tongue. Akkad, as the name of the northern part of Babylonia, must also date from this time when the seat of a universal sovereignty was fixed in the new, or hitherto undistinguished, city of Agade.

Much discussion has been devoted to the inquiry when the presence of Semitic-speaking people in

the River-lands is first to be observed, and what were their relations with the early Sumerians. These questions are not strictly capable of solution, because a complete answer would need to contemplate a period far beyond the purview of history. It is not unlikely that there had always been a mixture of Semitic with the prevailing Sumerian stock, and this mixture was doubtless stronger in the northern country of "Akkad," *i.e.* roughly, the land between Nippur in the south and Sippar in the north. Certain of the earliest kings of Kish preserved in the list bear names which are possibly Semitic, and this element grows decidedly stronger in the later dynasties of that city. It is not necessary to the present purpose that this blending of the races should be more nicely disputed of, nor that the origin of the Semites in question should be more remotely traced; these things could have little interest for a history of Ur, even if more convincing solutions could be found than are actually within the scope of the material. In any event, it is under the leadership of Sargon that the first epoch of Semitic rule known to history is instituted, and it is therefore requisite that some general account of the circumstances of this revolution should be given before proceeding to its direct consequences for Ur.

Native tradition knew a great deal about the founder of this new empire, and about his almost equally famous "son" (actually grandson) Naram-Sin. Their exploits are celebrated in formal chronicles, in legends, in religious and scientific

literature, and doubtless, though this has left few traces, in popular recollection, all of which combined to make them the most familiar historical figures that their country boasted. A romantic origin was indispensable for such an hero, and was duly supplied by an account of his birth and early years in which truth and fancy are, perhaps, inextricably intertwined. A fragment of a poem, which survives only in a late copy, introduces Sargon himself as relating his own story:—"Sargon the mighty king, the king of Agade, am I. My mother was lowly, my father I knew not, and my father's brother dwells in the mountains. My city is Azupiranu on the bank of the Euphrates. My lowly mother conceived me, in secret she bore me. She laid me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she closed my door, she cast me into the river which rose not over me. The river bore me up and carried me to Akki the ditcher; Akki the ditcher lifted me out and reared me as his own son. Akki the ditcher made me his garden-lad (?). While I was a garden-lad (?) the goddess Ishtar loved me and for *fifty*-four years I held the kingship." Even the king-list slackens for a moment its breathless stream of names and figures to cast up a detail or two concerning the hero's life. "At Agade," it says, "Sharrukin . . . a gardener, the cupbearer of Ur-Ilbaba, the king of Agade, and the man who built Agade, became king and reigned fifty-six years."

Between these two scraps of tradition, then, can be discerned what was the accepted notion as to

the conqueror's origin and rise to power. He was the child of obscure parents in a mean provincial town, and was exposed by a mother too poor even to keep him. Adopted by a clown who chanced to rescue him from the river, the child was brought up to his adoptive father's labour, and himself became a gardener. From this humble station he contrived to enter the palace service at Kish, no doubt as a menial, but succeeded in recommending himself to the king, Ur-Ilbaba, who held him in such favour that he was finally promoted to the office of cup-bearer, one of the most honourable and intimate employments about any Oriental court. Though the story proceeds no further, the next step is too familiar to be hazardous; from this position of confidence the young favourite found it easy, at the right moment, to aspire to the throne itself, either expecting his master's natural end, or hastening it by a prosperous intrigue. In short, the classic order of the usurper's progress. This faithfulness to pattern, as it might be called, betrays how great a contribution popular history has added to the native sources concerning the rise of Sargon. It would be too long, though highly relevant, to trace here precisely the same elements reappearing in the later examples of Enlil-bani, king of Isin (who also rose from the plough), and of Cyrus the Great, who was rescued and adopted by a neatherd, and whom one story makes the cup-bearer of his master Astyages the Mede. To be short, it is evident that a sort of theory, dictated indeed by common Oriental experience, had

prescribed the steps of a successful upstart, and into this mould all the notable usurpers were posthumously cast.

There is, however, nothing very improbable in the alleged fact that Sargon was at first of lowly station. Not merely did he not belong to the ruling family of Kish, but he was not even the ruler of a subject city, for it was not until his supremacy was already won that he made a new capital for himself in Agade, to the goddess of which city he ascribed all his success. Moreover, the very characteristics of the period which he opened are themselves the strongest witness to his intrusion into the ordered course of things. The dynasty of Agade was marked by two innovations, one racial, one artistic; the first in that it brought, as already observed, a Semitic language, and was based upon a predominance of Semitic speakers; the second, in that the new blood introduced or developed an entirely new style of sculpture, of writing, and doubtless of other productions. The language, the dress, and the political or military interests of the Agade kings all point to a familiarity with, and probably an origin from, the lands of the upper Euphrates and North Syria, while the monuments they have left are inspired with a freedom and an effective simplicity of execution which rejuvenated the Sumerian tradition, and created some works which are likely to be always considered the masterpieces of Babylonian art. Sargon, there is good reason to suppose, having raised himself to the throne,

deliberately headed an influx of his fellow-tribesmen, many of whom had perhaps already settled in the domains of Kish, as servants like himself, and had already become instructed in the culture of their masters.

The unprecedented success of this conqueror is amply celebrated in the literature of later centuries, and many details are available of the distant lands which he subdued.[14] From the mountains of Elam to the Phoenician coast his rule was spread by a succession of campaigns, and he is even said to have extended his sway over the distant Kaptara, which should be the island of Crete. In support of the trade in silver and wool he led an expedition over the mountains into Cappadocia and secured the privileges of his merchants among the native population ; the story is told with some of the romantic heightening of a *chanson de gestes*, but need not be fictitious even if elaborated. He took ship also on the Persian Gulf in order to fight against the Elamites, and destroyed several of their cities, as well as making himself master of the island of Dilmun, the modern Bahrain. With the exception of Egypt, which is never mentioned among his provinces, he thus controlled a more extensive dominion than any other king of the land, before or after. These things, however, belong to the general history of his reign, in which Ur has a much more limited interest, centred mainly upon one of his first years.

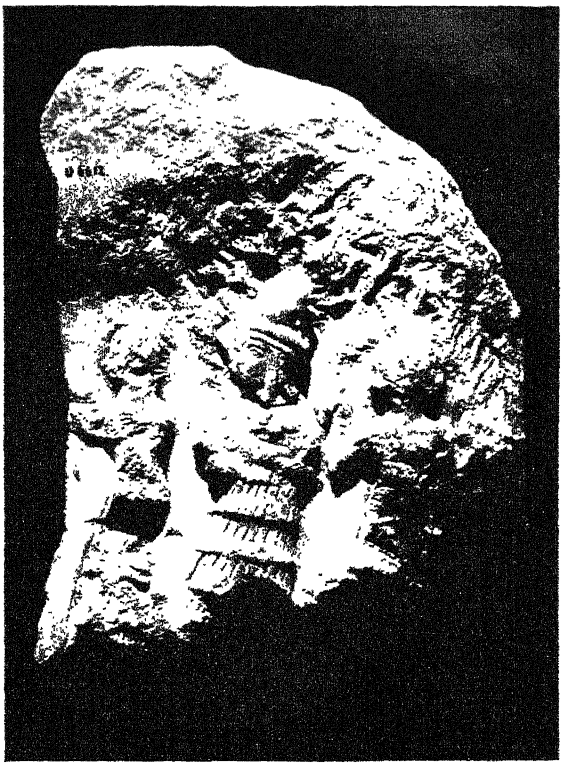
No sooner had Sargon set up his throne in Agade, having reduced, or at least defied, the successors

of Ur-Ilbaba at Kish, than he was confronted by the more formidable southern power of Lugal-zaggisi. In the twenty-five years which are allowed to his rule at Erech this monarch boasts that he had traversed all the land from the Upper Sea to the Lower, unperturbed by the kings of Kish who held their local authority at the same time. Indeed, they were actually, it seems, subject to him, for Naram-Sin glorifies his grandfather's achievement in restoring freedom to the people of Kish. For a while, then, there were three nominal authorities in the land, Lugal-zaggisi, the latter kings of the Fourth Kish Dynasty, and Sargon himself. The real struggle was to be between the first and the last. Sargon wilfully provoked the contest by offering a gross affront to Lugal-zaggisi, who was stung to such resentment that he would not at first give audience to Sargon's messenger. Almost immediately repenting of his own rashness, he could still do no more than indulge in weak complaints about the contumacy of his nominal vassal.[15] But Sargon, having extorted some pretext, was not to be put off; he marched southward with such speed that Lugal-zaggisi had barely time to levy a hasty array, and none to throw himself across the invader's path. The issue did not belie his fears. So paralysing was the speed of Sargon's advance that Erech, the southern capital, had fallen before Lugal-zaggisi could strike a blow in its defence. Under its walls Sargon routed a force led by "fifty" local governors, and gained the city forthwith, only to

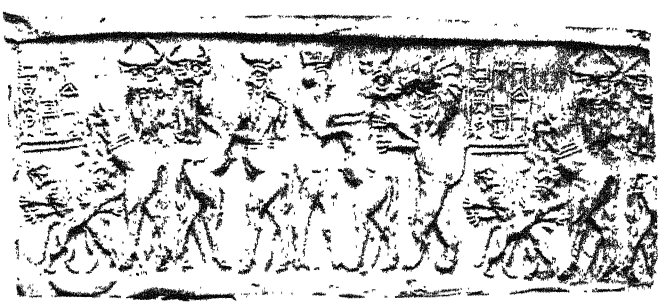
pass on instantly and encounter Lugal-zaggisi with his main body. The battle may have been more stubborn, but was not long in doubt; Lugal-zaggisi himself fell into the victor's hands, and graced his triumph. "With Lugal-zaggisi, king of Erech," says the inscription, "he did battle, and captured him, and led him in fetters through the gate of the god Enlil," at Nippur, where he also set up statues of himself with inscriptions on their pedestals celebrating his achievements. It is to copies of these made for practice by later scribes that knowledge of these great events is due. All that now remained was to complete the conquest of Lugal-zaggisi's former dominions. The second capital naturally attracted the next assault. "Sargon, king of Agade, did battle with the man (*i.e.* governor) of Ur and defeated him; his city he smote, and its wall he destroyed." Two other centres of the southern kingdom were captured without much difficulty, E-Ninmar and Lagash, which controlled all the land between the latter place and the sea-coast. As became a conqueror at the end of a victorious march, Sargon paused to wash his weapons ceremoniously in the sea. One more contest awaited him before Sumer was entirely his. Umma, the city of Lugal-zaggisi's first rule, would yet strive to avenge, if she could no longer defend, her most famous son. But her heroism in a cause already lost was vain; the result was ever the same. "Umma in battle he defeated, the city he smote and its wall he destroyed." With it disappeared the last bulwark

and the last remnant of the Sumerian kingdom of Erech.

This military subjection by no means involved the total ruin of the southern cities. On the contrary, they continued to flourish through participation in the active trade which sprang up within the wide boundaries, and under the security, of Sargon's empire. At Lagash the trading records of this time have been found in considerable volume. Umma and Erech are as yet insufficiently explored to yield evidence of their fortunes at this time, but Ur enjoyed no slight favour in the eyes of Sargon and his successors. Few tablets like those from Lagash have as yet been found, though it is hardly to be doubted that Ur took its full share in the same commerce, but a much more emphatic witness to its importance speaks through one of its monuments. This is a thick alabaster disk (the form representing the full moon), sculptured on one side with a row of figures (pl. 17) in relief, engaged in a ceremony of pouring libations, on the other with the broken fragments of an inscription. Enough of the latter remains to declare that this object was dedicated to the Moon-god by En-hedu-anna, the " wife " of the god, and daughter of Sargon himself. The position of this princess at Ur is perfectly explained by later parallels. She was the high-priestess of the god, and as such was regarded as his wife ; it was presumably her later counterpart at Babylon who is described by Herodotus as sleeping alone in the chamber on top of the stage-tower, she " whom



(*a*)



(*b*)

(*a*) Broken calcite disk of En-hedu-anna, daughter of Sargon of Agade, who was appointed priestess of the Moon-god at Ur (p. 92)

the god chooses from among all." When such a priestess and consort was required, the god made known his desire by celestial portents, and signified to the diviners,

"plucking the entrails of an offering forth"

the lady whom he had chosen. The inquiry was directed by the king in person, who presumed to offer none of lower consideration than the females of his own kindred, among whom the divine pleasure seldom failed to alight upon one of his nearest relations, a sister or a daughter. This custom was already honoured by Sargon, as doubtless it had been in still earlier times, and was until the end. The disk which his daughter offered to the god has survived in such pitiful case that its artistic merit, if such it had, is utterly marred. But there is, in fact, little to suggest that it showed the mastery of which its period was capable. Enhedu-anna can be seen in a stiff hieratic posture, wearing a tall egg-shaped mitre and raising the right hand in adoration, nor are her attendants rendered with any particular grace. Only the inscription, on the other side, has the clear symmetry which unmistakably marks the writing of Agade, and stamps the craftsman of this work as one of the court artists. He was not a very distinguished performer. Of the princess who thus presided over the moon worship of Ur in the great temple, which already bore the name of E-gish-shir-gal, nothing more is known, save a few cylinder-seals which belonged to her attendants. Her life was probably uneventful enough.

Sargon's reign ended, as it had begun, in revolt and war. Though he seems to have successfully crushed an insurrection of "all the lands," aided even by certain "elders" of his own people, who "beset him in Agade," yet the head of insurrection rose again in his last days, and there is a tradition that he was slain in a mutiny of his troops, after his fall had been presaged by a portent of horrific guise—an ewe gave birth to a lion with the head of a lamb. After this there was no peace for him. A chronicle says, "they revolted against him and (the god) gave him no rest," for he had angered Marduk by taking earth from the sacred city of Babylon to sanctify his new capital at Agade. His place was taken in succession by two of his sons, Rimush and Manishtusu. The former came to a throne encompassed with all the troubles that had vexed Sargon's last years. It is evident that he could count only upon his home-land, for the south country and the eastern hills were in full rebellion. Neither without good cause, for their subjugation by Sargon was the first they had suffered, and both to Elamite and Sumerian he was a foreigner. The southern cities were led against Rimush by the old partisans of Lugal-zaggisi, Ur and Umma, and in command of the rebel forces was a local "king" of Ur, whose name, being written by an ideogram, is uncertain. The question of attaching this prince to any of the dynasties of Ur does not arise. It is evident that he belonged to none, but was formally a subject of Agade, and ruling his city on its behalf. Yet the very existence

of such figures reveals the circumstances in which the king-list was drawn up, and goes far to explain its deficiencies. No matter how complete the ascendancy of one city, the local governor was, and is, the recognized instrument of Oriental empires, and any weakening of the central power is instantly turned to their own profit by the provincial despots. It often becomes, therefore, a nice speculation where supremacy actually lies, and a list of dynasties is necessarily eclectic. This rebellion proved abortive, being speedily crushed by the new king, whose inscriptions record with a show of meticulous accuracy the extent of his victory: "in a battle with Ur and Umma he won the victory, and slew 8,040 men, and 5,460 his hand captured, and *Ka-kug* king of Ur his hand captured, and his governors also his hand captured." Rimush continued his progress as far as the sea, subduing as he went. Altogether, he claims to have carried away 5,700 prisoners "from the cities of Sumer," and to have left their strongholds defenceless. His return march swerved eastwards against the city of Kazallu and its ruler Asharid. There a greater battle brought him an even greater success, with large numbers of slain and prisoners. In spite of this, and in spite of the earlier conquests of his father, Rimush had more hard fighting to do in Elam, where his rule evidently found the toughest opposition. At Ur, as in other cities, he dedicated to the god vessels captured in his Elamite victory. Of campaigns in more distant regions nothing is heard, but since he

maintains the proud boast of ruling all the lands from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean " and all the mountains " it is to be supposed that the empire of Sargon was not diminished in his hands. Rimush perished in a palace-revolution, much as his father had done. He is said to have been killed by the " sons of the palace," with their seals, a statement which seems strange, for, although the cylinder-seals of this period are exceptionally large and heavy, they could hardly be effective for stoning. A recent discovery at Ur suggests a more plausible explanation. It has been revealed that cylinder-seals were often worn attached by a bead-chain to a formidable copper pin used for fastening the clothing, and it would be much more feasible that the courtiers

> " stikede him with boydekins anoon
> With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye "

than that they should have tried to break his head with the seals themselves. The story of his end is preserved only in the diviners' books, where the exact aspect of the entrails which had foretold his doom is meticulously set down for the warning of future ages.

Of the dynasty of Agade there were three more kings to rule, the second of them being the celebrated Naram-Sin, who set up triumphal inscriptions at Ur which apprentice-scribes were set to copy five hundred years after, but they had no special reference to the city; he was almost as notable a figure in later tradition as his grand-

father Sargon. After them the kingdom fell for a while into utter confusion for three years, during which the king-list is able to enumerate four ephemeral pretenders, quaintly adding in token of its bewilderment "who was king, who was not king?" Before the end of the dynasty, however, two rulers in succession were able to secure themselves again upon the throne of Agade. How the empire of Sargon finally disappeared is unknown. The king-list closes it with the conventional note that Agade was smitten and its royalty passed to the "horde of Gutium," but it is easy to see that, interpreted strictly, this is misleading. An account tablet is dated "in the year when Shar-gali-sharri [5th king of the dynasty] . . . took prisoner Sharlak, king of Cuthah," and another "in the year when the expedition was made against Gutium." This king of Cuthah has a name characteristic of the Gutians who ruled the land as the next dynasty, and it is evident, therefore, that the Gutians had already made inroads, and even established themselves in Babylonia, long before the formal end of the Agade kingdom. Indeed it would not be very hazardous to see in the period of weakness and anarchy which followed Shar-gali-sharri the effect of a Gutian attack which nearly made an end of the dynasty, though in the event it contrived partly to re-establish itself. But at least it may be considered certain that, from the time of Shar-gali-sharri onwards, Gutian princes were already in control of great portions of the land, so that for many years the Akkadian

and the Gutian " dynasties " were reigning side by side. These new-comers were natives of a region east of the Tigris lying round about the modern Qara Dagh, hitherto little affected by Sumerian civilization. They were rough hillmen, and as such were regarded with horror and detestation by the cultivated citizens of the plains, who observed in them what seemed the depth of barbarism—they had no king among them. Without that primary institution the Sumerians could see no possibility of connexion between gods and men, and hence no possibility for men to be raised out of savagery. But it was not until they came into the plains that the Gutians appointed a king over them, and therewith began to use or acquire the arts of their Sumerian subjects, until their later kings, indeed, probably differed little from the people among whom they had come to rule. It is the common experience of history that hardy and often rude races of conquerors pay for their military success against more cultivated peoples by losing to a great extent their own identity in a few generations and being absorbed in the more complex unity of the vanquished ; the River-lands had several experiences of this sort, and always with the same result. The " dynasty of Gutium " is allotted its total of kings and its definite point of subversion in the same way as the later alien dynasty of the Kassites, but it did not rule for nearly so long as the latter, and consequently did not become so indistinguishable from its subjects. Hence there was a genuine outburst of Sumerian

national enthusiasm when the long barbarian oppression was at last shattered by a native rebel.

Throughout all the years filled by the end of the Agade dynasty and the Gutian tyranny hardly anything is known concerning the fortunes of Ur, and hardly a relic of that age has been recovered. The city had probably ceased to obey the kings of Agade after the reign of Shar-gali-sharri, and may have fallen under the control of a Gutian despot, or, perhaps more likely, had recovered the degree of local independence which was the normal condition of the great cities in the absence of any especially strong external power. It might be supposed that this period of more than a century was one of decline in civilization and the arts, under alien oppressors who added apathy to barbarism. Yet although so long a time passes in which nothing of note seems to have been done life was not standing still in the Sumerian cities, and it is out of the darkness of the later Gutian rule that there arises the brilliant achievement of Lagash, now under a new family of rulers.

It was by this time about a century and a half since Lagash was last seen, a prey to the victorious troops of Lugal-zaggisi, who had thus put an end to the last successor of Ur-Nina and to the first epoch of the city's glory. Soon afterwards it fell once more, when Lugal-zaggisi had to yield to Sargon. Many subsequent years had passed in almost complete silence, until a certain Ur-Bau is found upon the throne, under whom the power and wealth of the city rapidly increased. Nothing,

unfortunately, is known of his doings except what may be read in his own inscriptions, and therefore even his date, like that of his greater successor Gudea, is very vague. It may, however, be considered certain that he did not begin to reign until after the death of Shar-gali-sharri. For the kings of Agade, in their flourishing days, would certainly not have brooked so powerful a vassal, whereas everything indicates that the rule of Gutium, in spite of its humiliation of Agade, and in spite of its nominal supremacy, was exceedingly feeble and sporadic, and could have offered no hindrance to the rise of independent princes in the old cities. Ur-Bau used in his buildings a peculiar large brick which had been introduced by Naram-Sin, and for this reason it is natural to assume that he lived not very long after the time of Shar-gali-sharri, when Lagash was freed from the control of Agade, and owed a very tenuous, if any, allegiance to the Gutian overlords; this would imply that, approximately, his reign fell in the years about 2400 B.C. Moreover, his daughter was married to Nammakhni, who was himself grandson of a certain *Ka-kug*, a former governor of Lagash, not impossibly identical with that *Ka-kug*, king of Ur, who had been defeated by Rimush, in view of the close relation that often subsisted between Ur and Lagash. In any case the reign of Ur-Bau marks the reappearance of fine works of art at Lagash. The best-known is a statue of the governor, now headless, but foreshadowing the style of Gudea and of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Its back is

covered by a long inscription concerned entirely with the sacred buildings which Ur-Bau restored. The number and extent of these works unmistakably declare a new wealth and importance as well as a state of conscious independence, since, with very rare exceptions, it was always the prerogative of rulers only to seek the divine blessing on their reigns by rebuilding temples. It is, therefore, merely consistent with what was already known of Ur-Bau's position that he has now been found in control of another great city outside the actual seat of his royalty. The connexion between Lagash and Ur seems, indeed, to have been singularly persistent since the days of Eannatum; under Ur-Bau certain stone vases were dedicated to the Moon-god by En-anni-padda, who writes himself son of Ur-Bau, "tenant-farmer" of Lagash, and held the high-priesthood at Ur. But such an office clearly implied that his father was in control of Ur, since both earlier and later examples show that members of the ruling family were regularly chosen for it. Ur-Bau, then, held Ur, at least, in addition to Lagash, and probably other cities as well, for his name was familiar to later ages as that of a great king; it is manifest that the Gutian "dynasty" counted for very little, although its nominal authority was not to be abolished for more than another century. Throughout all this period, too, the governors of Lagash used their own names for the years, designating each by some local achievement of their own, a practice which no effective

overlord would have suffered, but would have imposed his own formulae. The discovery of En-anni-padda, a son of Ur-Bau, holding the priesthood at Ur raises, indeed, the curious question why it was necessary for two sons-in-law to succeed to the throne of Lagash, to the apparent exclusion of the direct line; as to this nothing is known and conjecture would be idle.

The glories of Ur-Bau's reign, whatever they may have been, have left few palpable relics, and therefore are eclipsed, at least in modern estimation, by the numerous and splendid monuments of Gudea, a successor of unknown parentage, divided from Ur-Bau by an uncertain, but evidently not long, interval, since both the style of his sculptures, and the inscriptions which so copiously adorn them, stand in very close relation with his predecessor's. But the progress is no less apparent than the relationship, and it was, in fact, under Gudea at Lagash that certain arts, particularly sculpture in the round, attained their highest perfection. The person of Gudea is more familiar than that of any other Sumerian ruler, thanks to the unrivalled series of statues representing him, now preserved for the most part in the Museum of the Louvre. Only three or four of the heads still exist, but this is enough to show that they were sculptured at different times of his life, and to attest that they were actual portraits. The figure, indeed, has most of the block-like heaviness which neither Babylonian nor Assyrian artists were ever able to conquer when working in the round, and

there is no attempt to present the natural hang of the costume, but the head, if slightly disproportioned, is admirably done: the features are delicate, even sensitive, the eyes gain much by being carved in the stone, not inlaid, and the whole, body as well as head, is beautifully treated in detail and highly finished. For these statues blocks of fine stone were procured from distant lands, as the inscriptions frequently relate, and it is from the extent of expeditions sent to obtain these and other foreign products that something may be inferred as to the power of the prince who scarcely ever alludes, in all that he wrote, to his political or military position, but almost exclusively to religious matters. The age of Gudea doubtless exhibited as great a mastery in other material arts as it did in sculpture, but the products, being generally perishable, no longer survive. In one other art his reign has, owing to an accident of material which has been of infinite profit to a far-distant posterity, left a lasting monument of high achievement; Gudea (or his scribe) is chiefly famed as the principal figure in Sumerian literature. The long inscriptions on his statues are preserved by the hardness of the stone, the even more elaborate compositions of his "cylinders" remain, owing to the imperishability of baked clay, to which single quality almost the whole survival of the knowledge of Babylonian civilization is due. All that he wrote concerned the building of temples and the making of statues and cult-objects to furnish them, but the "cylinders" have a few

passages of some descriptive merit, and are of great interest as the longest and most developed documents of the Sumerian language, written while that language was still in common use, not, like so many later compositions, when it had receded into little more than the object of learned cultivation.

The search for stone, metals, and timber carried the envoys of Gudea far afield. In one case, at least, his caravans were forcibly resisted, and this led to a regular expedition against the country of Anshan, in the neighbourhood of Susa. Though this is his only recorded military exploit, the mere possibility of such an action proves that the subordination of Lagash to the Gutians was scarcely perceptible, if indeed it existed at all. Besides Elam, the countries which were visited for materials were distant and far-separated: stone was got by voyages down the Persian Gulf, gold from Asia Minor beyond the Taurus range, timber and marble from Syria, copper from the eastern hills. All or most of these products were most likely collected by peaceful trading. But the wealth which could command these luxuries, and the power which could use them for its own glorification, were greater than belonged to the ruler of a single city, and Ur has supplied evidence that Gudea was, in fact, more than this. Several small memorials of his, found in the excavations, reveal that his building activity extended to Ur, from which it follows that, like Ur-Bau, he also included Ur in his dominions. The persistent connexion between the two cities since Eannatum

has already been observed, as it will reappear later, and these occasional visible links may be taken as earnest of an association which was seldom interrupted throughout this obscure period. Nothing more, however, is to be gathered concerning the fortunes of Ur at this time beyond the bare fact that it owed no allegiance to Gutium. The probability is, indeed, that the city was almost independent, owing little effective obedience to Lagash, for in no place does Gudea make any allusion either to it or to any other cities that he may have controlled, and such complete silence would be remarkable, even allowing for the purely religious purpose of his inscriptions, if he had in any sense considered himself a conqueror. Gudea, as a strong, effective, and wealthy ruler enjoyed, in view of the long-standing connexion between the two cities, an ascendancy at Ur which had so far failed to produce a local leader; it was to be otherwise soon after. Of an alliance against the Gutian oppressors it would be misleading to speak, for the old cities of the south were never capable of uniting even against a common enemy, and, in fact, when the Gutians were finally expelled, it was the work of another local "dynasty," as it had been from the beginning of history.

How long after the death of Gudea this event occurred is not known, since Gudea's own position in time is (within the limits of the Gutian dynasty) quite uncertain. He was succeeded by a son, Ur-Ningirsu, of whose doings there is no record; at least it was not he who was the destined

deliverer. The king-list reckons the Gutian supremacy at about 125 years, and concludes it with the usual formula, "the host of Gutium was smitten with arms, its kingship passed to Erech." It chances that a good many details have come down concerning this event. A tablet has been found which describes how a certain Utu-hegal, "king" of Erech, finding upon his accession the land reduced to misery and lawlessness by the bandit raids of the Gutians, was appointed by the god Enlil "to destroy their name." The result of a century of foreign tyranny is forcibly described—"Gutium, the stinging serpent of the hills, the enemy of the gods, had carried off the kingship of Sumer to the mountains, and had filled Sumer with enmity, for it had reft away wife and child from him that had them, and set enmity and wickedness in the land," and again, "the Tigris and the seashore he (*i.e.* the king of Gutium) has occupied, unto the lower parts of Sumer the fields he has barred, unto the upper parts the way he has barred, and the roads of the country have grown long grass"; [16] it was as when Israel likewise suffered under the Philistine spoilers, "in the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways," because the highroads were infested by robbers.

Utu-hegal's revolt was evidently prompted by the accession of a new ruler in Gutium, a moment always chosen in Oriental monarchies for internal disturbances. The new king, Tirigan, had barely

assumed the throne when Utu-hegal, at the head of his levies from Erech and Kullab—his own dominions, for nothing is heard of help from other centres — marched northward, directly challenging the Gutian power, which, as the independence of Gudea shows, was mainly, and perhaps exclusively, effective in Akkad, the northern part of the land. A plain defiance was the answer returned to the captains whom Tirigan sent into Sumer, and both sides prepared for a battle which resulted in the utter defeat of the Gutians. The soothsayers of a later day could find in the entrails an " omen of Tirigan, the king, who fled from the midst of his host." He was forced to take refuge with his wife and son in the town of Dubrum, but was speedily surrendered by the inhabitants when they saw that " Utu-hegal was the king whom Enlil had endued with strength." Tirigan had reigned only forty days, and his dynasty ended with him, the kingship returning home again, as it were, to Sumer from its long exile in the mountains, and when Utu-hegal set foot on the neck of his vanquished master he instituted the Fifth Dynasty of Erech, which was to endure but the seven years of his own short reign.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE THIRD DYNASTY

LAGASH, which never boasted a kingship of its own, but has proved so curiously rich in the memorials of other cities, has again provided the only hitherto known inscriptions of Utu-hegal. These are no more than a few small clay cones with two short commemorations of "fixing the boundary" of the city and delimiting thereby the territory of the local god and goddess, Ningirsu and Nina. In one of these occurs a significant phrase, "he fixed the boundary (to) the man of Ur," [17] which suggests rather than reveals an interesting political situation. The "man of Ur," in the usage of the time, signifies the ruler of Ur, and the king-list discloses that Utu-hegal's reign was of little more than seven years, after which he was supplanted by Ur-Nammu, founder of the Third Dynasty, and of the most brilliant fortunes of Ur. Two other monuments found in the excavations at Ur itself have their significance for this period; they are dedications made on behalf of Utu-hegal by a governor of Ur, whose name began with Ur——, and whose title definitely indicates a subordinate ruler. That his name is to be completed as Ur-Nammu is hardly open to

doubt, since both the form of the inscription agrees entirely with those known to be his, and no other person could be so plainly indicated by the circumstances. It results, therefore, that Ur-Nammu became the local prince of Ur during the reign of Utu-hegal at Erech, probably by appointment of the latter after his victory over Tirigan. In recognition of this he set up inscriptions to record the offerings he had made to the gods in favour of his benefactor, and to mark his loyalty to the rule of Erech. That loyalty soon yielded to the temptation of increasing power, and the little cones from Lagash appear to show that the overlord soon had to check the ambition of his servant, for they suggest that Ur-Nammu was seeking to extend his authority over Lagash, or at least to encroach upon its lands. The close relations that had long existed between the two cities has already been several times observed. Hitherto it had generally been Lagash exercising control of Ur, but now the direction was reversed. It may be that Lagash was Ur-Nammu's first objective when he began to feel his own city's limits too narrow for him. Utu-hegal was well aware of the danger to his authority of this aggression, and was able to impose his veto. The later developments can only be guessed, but since the issue certainly was the disappearance of Utu-hegal and the transfer of the kingdom from Erech to Ur, it is no unsafe presumption that the powerful vassal soon broke into open rebellion and violently usurped the throne.

Ur-Nammu appears without introduction at the head of his city, and, after thus short a prelude, at the head of an empire. It is not unlikely that he had been one of Utu-hegal's captains in the fight with Gutium, and had been rewarded with the governorship of Ur, since, although singularly little is heard of his warlike exploits, he must have been a more than commonly successful soldier to win and establish so splendid a kingdom. But the force which bore him to power was doubtless the unspent reaction of Sumer against the foreign tyrants. Utu-hegal had indeed set this triumphantly in motion, but it was not he who was destined to control it, and an abler man entered upon the rewards of its success. The strength of this reaction is the measure of the intensity of a national consciousness which had been exasperated by more than a century of servitude, and it is of interest, therefore, to inquire what people it now was which responded to so profound a sentiment of unity. That the unity was racial could not possibly be true after the invasions to which the land had been subjected within some three hundred years, even if it might be assumed that the Sumerian race was pure before the coming of Sargon, as to which no certainty can be felt, since the origin and affinities of that race are still quite undetermined. But after the dominion of Agade, which left such palpable impressions upon the arts and language of the country, it would be inconceivable that the Sumerians, even in the south, contrived to preserve such purity of race as they

may hitherto have boasted. All the old cities had long been held by Akkadian governors and garrisons, and it was inevitable that these should leave a new element among the population, marked by an obvious difference of language, and a certain, though far less definable, difference of physical feature.

How deeply the penetration of the Sumerians by this new element had gone it is very difficult to say, because no reliable physical criteria can be found, and certain distinctions of fashion, particularly in the wearing or shaving of the hair, are dictated by status or etiquette rather than by ethnic custom, as was formerly supposed. Craniology has no verdict to give in this matter; repeated measurement has shown that skulls which should belong to a hypothetically pure Sumerian stock, that is, skulls of pre-Sargonic date, are not so consistently short-headed as the archaic sculpture seems to depict, any more than the "Semitic" skulls of later periods have a consistent affinity with the assumed characteristic long-head of the desert Arab, who is taken as the best representative of the "Semitic" peoples. It is now, indeed, admitted that the "Semitic race" is a figment, not merely in Babylonia, but universally. The name belongs, in fact, and can with propriety be applied, only to a particular family of languages, which have been, and still are, spoken by peoples of very different ethnic character. This one valid test of language, applied to the subjects of the Third Dynasty, gives the result

which might be expected from the historic antecedents. Shulgi, second king of the dynasty, admits the Semitic language to a limited use in his royal inscriptions, and the succeeding kings doubtless observed the same practice, though it is actually attested only in the case of Gimil-Sin. But the scantiness and unimportance of official records is an unfortunate paradox in this imperial epoch; they contribute no more to the present question than they do to the political history of the time, which is surprisingly little known in comparison with the commercial and social conditions. A more ample material is found in the personal names, so copiously represented in the literature of business. Of these a very respectable proportion is Semitic, and the bearers of these names occupy no inferior position, but one of complete equality with the Sumerians. Indeed, they are prominent among the local governors of cities subject to the kings of Ur, and those not distant cities, but belonging to the old "Land," or to districts in the closest touch with it. The conclusion is plain that, if the Sumerians were still somewhat, or even considerably, in preponderance, the Semites, descendants mainly of the Akkadian conquerors, had firmly established themselves in the population, and, so far from being considered interlopers, were animated by a common patriotic sentiment with the Sumerians against the foreign tyranny of the Gutians.

Of bare historical facts about the Third Dynasty of Ur there is a most regrettable dearth, which is

accentuated by the correlative plenty of information about the life of the time. Formal accounts of the deeds of these kings are completely lacking, having neither been composed by themselves nor much recollected by tradition. One late chronicle does, indeed, contain a perfunctory notice of Shulgi, and there was once a poetical account of his reign, professedly delivered by the king himself, but for some reason they did not capture the imagination of posterity as Sargon had done. Either in their own reigns or during the succeeding dynasty of Isin a few hymns were addressed to these deified princes, but their vague panegyrical language has nothing whatever to relate concerning the worldly achievements of those whose glory they sang. The only fragments of direct historical information are preserved in the date-formulae,[18] the descriptive designations which marked the years, and were appended as dates to all accounts, deeds, receipts, lists, and every record of commercial transaction. These invariably have the form of a name applied to the year, and are drawn mainly from religious, but not uncommonly also from secular, events: "year when the exalted throne of the god Enlil was made," or else "year when Simuru and Lullubu were ravaged for the ninth time." In this period the formulae are mostly of a very unsatisfying brevity, and indeed their purpose never was to mention more than one event, regarded as the main distinction of the year. The rather longer formulae used under the succeeding dynasties of Isin, Larsa, and Babylon,

are more wordy but not much more informative. Apart from these scanty resources everything has to be gathered by inference, and at the beginning and end of the dynasty even the dates are very incompletely preserved. Many royal inscriptions have indeed been gathered from bricks, clay cones, stone tablets, statuettes and other objects of religious significance, but these record nothing more than the building of temples or the dedication of offerings to the gods, and therefore contribute hardly anything to the political history of the period.

Ur-Nammu founded his dynasty, as already described, directly upon the dispossession of Erech, but actually upon the victory over the Gutians. Of the steps by which he rose, and of his deeds abroad as king, scarcely anything is known. The king-list gives him a reign of eighteen years, but only for three or four of these have the date-formulae been found, since tablets written in this reign are exceedingly few. This can hardly be an accident, the mere chance that they do not happen to have been discovered yet, for thousands of tablets belonging to the later reigns are extant, derived from several different sites, and it is most unlikely that the years of Ur-Nammu would not be better represented if any considerable number of tablets had in fact been written under his rule. It seems, rather, that the great volume of commercial activity which so distinguishes this dynasty did not begin till after the accession of Shulgi, whose own later years are very much more fre-



(*a*)



(*b*)

KINGS OF THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR:
(*a*) Ur-Nammu setting forth with the tools of a builder to begin work upon

quently read upon tablets than his earlier. Not until then, indeed, had the empire of Ur been so extended and consolidated that offerings could come into the temples from distant tributaries and trade move freely from one end of the land to the other. How far the authority of Ur-Nammu extended remains in doubt; since he was engaged in building at Nippur, Lagash, Larsa, and other towns, it is evident that he held Sumer, but there is nothing but his title to attest his sway in the more northerly Akkad. Against this significant absence the vain rhetoric of a later hymn in his honour idly exalts his rule over distant lands. One of his surviving date-formulae has an obscure allusion to a military expedition—"he made straight his way from below to above," which looks like a repetition of Lugal-zaggisi's claim to have marched from the lower sea to the upper sea, presumably from the Persian Gulf to the Syrian coast. If this is what Ur-Nammu meant, and if he actually did so, it was no more than a successful raid, for there is nothing to suggest that he subdued or held extensive provinces along the Euphrates; even his successors were conspicuously weak in that direction. However, he uses in all his inscriptions the style of "king of Sumer and Akkad," as Utu-hegal had done before him; thereby he doubtless meant to proclaim himself successor to all that kingdom which had been wrested from the Gutians, but for the boundaries of this there is no evidence. Ur-Nammu's territory must, for the present, be measured by the

occurrence of his monuments, and this test allows him but a modest dominion.

Shulgi (or Dungi—the name is uncertain), son of Ur-Nammu, is assigned a reign of forty-seven years, for nearly all of which the date-formulae are extant, so that some outline, at least, of his acts can still be traced. Many of them, especially in the earlier part of the reign, were religious observances in the temples of the nearer cities, at Ur itself, at Nippur, for which the king seems to have had a particular care, but also at Der and Kazallu, two places in the lands east of the Tigris, where Shulgi's activity already foreshowed the direction in which the energies of his later years were mainly to be bent. Warlike enterprises are scarcely represented until about the middle of his reign, and it seems indeed that the creation of the empire abroad did not begin before then. Nothing is more indicative of this than the dating of the business documents which, as already observed, do not occur in great numbers in his early years; indeed, it is only at Lagash that these years are found at all; at Nippur, Umma, and Adab there is nothing before the last decade of his reign.

It would be idle to speculate upon the causes which kept the founders of the Third Dynasty so straitly at home until the latter years of the second king, but the somewhat sudden expansion must have been permitted by a collapse of opposition abroad, and the scene of Shulgi's campaigning, when he was at last released, sufficiently marks that opposition as centred in the eastern

hill-country. The Gutians had indeed been defeated, and expelled from the plain, but they and their allies were evidently strong enough to hold their own for many years in their own lands, and when the barriers at last gave way it was no doubt owing to some internal decay, as to the course of which nothing at all can at present be gathered, rather than to any sudden accession of strength to the forces of Ur. In the fourteenth year a daughter of the king became "lady" of Marhashi, a district east of the Tigris and north of Elam, presumably by marriage with the native prince, and with this alliance began the north-eastward penetration which was to be the main task of the whole dynasty. Beginning in the twenty-second year the dates record at short intervals the subjection of various eastern districts, some of which can be located with fair precision. They extend from Anshan in the south, a province in the neighbourhood of Susa, to Urbillum in the north, a place which has been identified with Arbela, the modern town of Irbil. Moreover, there is evidence that, in the last years of Shulgi's reign a certain Zariku brought tribute from the city of Ashur itself, which thus appears for the first time in history. It is known from a stele which he set up in his own city (whence it has lately been recovered), that Zariku lived on into the time of Bur-Sin, whose vassal he declares himself. These extensive conquests were the source of great wealth, which now began to pour into Sumer, as disclosed in the innumerable records of revenue entering the temples of the

greater cities. Their products were chiefly flocks and herds, the wool and hides obtained from these, and metals which were mined in the mountains. But the maintenance of control over the stubborn inhabitants was a severe tax upon the strength of the dynasty, and in the end became impossible, when a new danger threatened from the other flank. Shulgi had repeatedly to fight his battles over again, as many as nine times in the case of two particularly tough opponents, and his successors were still unable, even after all these efforts, to relax their vigilance or their strength among the hillmen. Only Susa appears to have yielded a willing obedience to the kings of Ur, to whom it was bound by especially close relations of commerce and government. Shulgi built there a temple to the local god, and in his days it seems indeed to have been counted almost as a centre of the empire rather than a conquered province. Since the dynasty of Agade the culture of the plain had been so much at home in Susa that the city had ceased to regard itself as foreign, and was therefore prepared to accept the supremacy of Ur with little more reluctance than would have been felt by Lagash or Nippur. From the time when the empire was firmly established a constant traffic of messengers passed to and from Susa and the principal towns of Elam, mostly on errands of ordinary business, fetching or carrying merchandise; sometimes men-at-arms are found, perhaps acting as escorts to a caravan, occasionally royal officers make the journey bearing the king's orders

or going to gather his revenues. The copious records of this posting service reveal the existence of a regular tariff of pay to the employees, and their very number tells of an intensity of communication which could be maintained only in a perfect state of peace and amid conditions of material welfare.

On the east and north, in which directions the arms of Shulgi were carried farthest, the limits of his dominions may be set roughly at the lower slopes of the mountains between the Upper Zab and the Kerkha. Along the Euphrates their extent is much more doubtful. He was, at least, effective master of Akkad, as Ur-Nammu had probably never been, since his governors were placed in Cuthah, Babylon, and Marad, in the first of which cities the king bestowed much care in rebuilding the temple of the god Nergal, and commemorated this act in a Semitic inscription appropriate to the language of the place. A chronicle written many centuries later declares that Shulgi behaved very differently in Babylon, where he is said to have carried off as spoil the treasures of E-sagila, the chief temple of the city, for which sacrilege he was afterwards slain by the wrath of the god Marduk, who caused the dogs to devour his corpse. Nothing of this appears in the contemporary records, where Babylon is found under a dependent local governor sending offerings to the official cults and taking part in the ordinary activities of other cities of the empire, but there is no reason to doubt that the sack

actually took place, it may be as the result of an abortive act of rebellion. Since the king's death could be colourably represented as the blow of divine vengeance this event may have happened towards the end of his reign. If this is all that can be said of the political fortunes of Akkad under Shulgi, even less is known of the lands still farther to the north-west. The last definite point up the Euphrates is the city of Tutuli, which is most probably the modern Hit; this was undoubtedly within the empire of Ur, since it appears constantly in the account-tablets as contributing to the cults at Nippur, and was included in the posting system. Beyond this it is not likely that the arm of Ur prevailed very far. In the cattle-lists of Drehem, where the beasts sent in from subject cities to the official sacrifices at Nippur were concentrated, there appear certain men described as *Su*, which may be a contraction for Subartu, the general name given to a wide tract of country in the plains of Northern Mesopotamia, between the Habur and the Tigris, and extending eastwards over the modern town of Kirkuk. But, even if these men are rightly so identified, there is no suggestion that any part of Subartu was controlled by Shulgi; they are merely foreign slaves. Another class of men sometimes found in the account-tablets is the *Mar-tu*, or Amorites, who were engaged in subordinate positions, as men-at-arms, or employees in the messenger service. This description stamps them as foreigners, at least in origin, though they might adopt Sumerian names, and indicates as their

origin the land of Amurru, *i.e.* "the west," a land at this period very vaguely defined, but including North Syria, west of the great bend of the Euphrates, and perhaps wide tracts of the Syrian desert. The inhabitants of these lands were barbarous and needy, and were therefore constantly attracted towards the rich lands and cities of Sumer and Akkad. Long before this time they had been defeated by Shar-gali-sharri of the Agade dynasty, but Sumerian kings had, in general, been less concerned with fighting their unorganized hordes than with securing, by force or trade, the building-materials which their land yielded in plenty. There is, indeed, no record either of expeditions or trade in these parts under the Third Dynasty, but it may safely be assumed that timber and stone continued to be brought thence, and trade is the only conceivable method, for subsequent history in the succeeding reigns shows that, so far from controlling the Amorites, the kings of Ur stood in frequent apprehension of their wild attacks, which in the end proved fatal to the empire. Such Amorites, then, as were found in Sumer were certainly of servile origin, captives or the sons of captives, and their presence by no means implies the extension of Sumerian rule into Syria.

Limited as the conquests of Shulgi were in certain directions, he felt justified in assuming, towards the end of his reign, the title "king of the four regions," which had been borne before him not only by the great Naram-Sin but by such a

ruler as Utu-hegal. These two instances are enough to show that its significance was variable, since the ephemeral king of Erech, despite his victory over the Gutians in the plains, certainly ruled no such empire as the most famous conqueror among his predecessors. Shulgi's use of the title was justified, indeed, as the mark of an achievement surpassing his father's, but it is not valid as a claim to supremacy over the " four regions " of Sumer and Akkad, Elam, Subartu, and Amurru (as they were identified by later ages), since it is tolerably clear that the last two, at least, were scarcely touched by his authority. From this time onward, in any case, the kings of the Third Dynasty retained the title. Even more significant of Shulgi's real power is the institution of king-worship in his times. Though there is evidence that Ur-Nammu also received divine honours and offerings, the records of these belong to later reigns, and it is most likely that they were decreed to him posthumously by Shulgi when he himself assumed the style of a god and therefore must needs be sprung of a divine father. Once founded, the cult of the god-kings flourished exceedingly: they possessed their own shrines, endowed with ample revenues, and enjoyed the hospitality of the older gods, who complacently found room in their establishments for the new immortals, and condescended to mingle the appreciable revenues of these with their own ancient dues. But if the apotheosis of these kings was self-conferred, at least it fitted well with the national instincts

quickened by their success and their magnificence. Not only did priests compose hymns of rather empty panegyric in their honour, but men began to give names to children in praise and reverence of the national hero, and such picturesque phrases as "Shulgi is my Sun-god" or "Gimil-Sin is good to the army" made up in patriotism what they lacked in convenience. Deification of kings became, indeed, conventional for a time, continuing through the succeeding dynasties of Isin and Larsa, though doubtless with ever less spontaneity, until it was discontinued by the line of Hammurabi at Babylon.

The two successors of Shulgi, though their reigns were short, retained undiminished the glory of his later years. Bur-Sin had still a good deal of hard campaigning to keep in subjection the eastern and north-eastern hills. Almost every other year expeditions were needed to reassert his authority over the stubborn mountaineers, particularly on the eastern confines of Assyria, though his rule was peacefully acknowledged in the city of Ashur itself, where a local governor built a temple "for the life of Bur-Sin." These frontier-wars, however, did not as yet cause any great stir at home, where the volume of business continued unabated, and the cults of the gods and the king flourished. Bur-Sin and his successors may indeed have been rather heirs than winners of empire, but they certainly did not lack vigour, and it was not until a new danger added itself to the old that the work of Shulgi was brought into jeopardy.

Among the date-formulae of Gimil-Sin, the fourth king of the dynasty, are mentioned not only two campaigns on the usual eastern side, but a new and ominous change of front; his fourth year is called that wherein he "built the wall of Amurru (the west), that keeps away Tidnu," and in his last (ninth) year he added to certain inscriptions which were deposited in the temple at Umma a rather obscure phrase alluding again to Amurru; it seems to assert that he repulsed an attempted invasion of these enemies. At least it is clear that a new danger became pressing in the reign of Gimil-Sin, and was to prove fatal to his son. The place called Tidnu, though still unlocated, was at least situated somewhere in the Amorite, or west, country, and serves together with the specific mentions of the Amorite name, to show that the dynasty of Ur must henceforth defend itself on the line of both the rivers instead of the Tigris only, as hitherto.

The new foe was not to be despised. At this period the Amorites were, like the Gutians before them, observed with disgust by the cultivated subjects of Ur on account of their barbarity. A poem, written indeed somewhat later, but faithfully describing the recent condition of this people, represents them as no better than savages before they entered Akkad and Sumer; they lived by warfare, they grubbed up desert herbs for food, having no cooked meat, they were houseless, and careless even of burying their dead.[19] But the rude vigour of such a life made them formidable

warriors, and their attacks were but stimulated by defeat. Under Gimil-Sin the empire was still able to keep them in check without internal disturbance, but his son Ibi-Sin (pl. 19*b*) was faced with a grave crisis almost at his accession. How he was able to maintain himself for so long a reign as twenty-five years cannot now be followed even in barest outline, since the great outpouring of temple-accounts and business documents stops with significant suddenness after his first two or three years, so that his year-dates are mostly lost, and those which survive cannot at present be arranged in order. A considerable accession to these has been made from tablets discovered at Ur itself, which seem to prove that commercial activity was still possible in the capital after insecurity had killed it in more outlying places. But even the few early dates are sufficient to show that he inherited the full burden of trouble in the north-east, where in one year he reduced again the town of Simuru which had given unending trouble to Shulgi before him. Still more serious, however, were events further south. For some reason, and by some steps which can no longer be traced, Elam, once the most obedient vassal and pupil of Sumer, broke into a revolt which involved all its principal cities. A formula written upon tablets recently found at Ur commemorates a great battle in which Ibi-Sin defeated "in one day, like a storm" the armies of Susa, Adamdun, and Awan, and made prisoner the commander of these united and neighbouring cities, a triumph which was celebrated

by many dedications in the temples of Ur. Another year was celebrated by a victory over Huhnuri and Anshan. Unhappily there is no clue to the position of these events in Ibi-Sin's reign, but since his doom came ultimately from Elam it may be supposed that some years were needed for the restoration of the Elamite power.

Meantime equally disastrous conditions prevailed on the Euphrates. A third year-date, also recently discovered at Ur, tells how he brought into submission "the Amurru, a host (whose onslaught was) like a hurricane, (a people) who had never known a city"; again, the highly-civilized townsman's wondering disgust at the incredible barbarity of the nomads. The order of events is, of course, uncertain, but this victory, temporary as the other against Elam, was probably won towards the end of the reign, when the shadows were fast thickening about the doomed empire, though at least a year remained to be known as that wherein "Enlil laid the yoke of Ibi-Sin's glory upon the lands." At Nippur there were found three copies of some rather obscure letters written, or purporting to be written, by Ibi-Sin himself to the governor of his eastern dependency Kazallu. Though it is hardly possible to follow their full drift, they are at any rate full of alarmed complaints concerning the hostility of one Ishbi-Irra, the "man of Maer," who thus appears for the first time. This new personage was, in fact, the enemy destined to overthrow the dynasty of Ur.

The exact site of the city which he governed is still unknown, but it is supposed to have lain somewhere near the confluence of the Habur with the Euphrates. In any case the people whom he led against Ur were the inhabitants of the lands along the middle Euphrates, since in the dynasty which he subsequently founded at Isin the god of these regions, Dagan, was honoured in the names of two of the kings. What relation his movement bore to the earlier Amorite attacks upon Ibi-Sin is hard to make out. Nevertheless, since both are known to have assaulted Ur from the same direction it is natural to suppose that Ishbi-Irra put himself at the head of these tribesmen, or at least enlisted their aid.

It is clear that Ibi-Sin was now fully engaged in a desperate fight upon two fronts; Elam was again in arms. Distracted between two dangers, the doomed king could make head against neither. Two of his years are dated from his building of the walls of Nippur and Ur; the enemy was at the heart of the empire. On the west Ishbi-Irra proved invincible, his success being foreshadowed by a singular portent, ever afterwards handed down for the instruction of posterity —an ewe gave birth to a calf with two tails. It was the "omen of Ishbi-Irra, who had no rival." Ibi-Sin himself finds no mean place in the augural books, which had not failed to mark the signs foreboding so signal a calamity as his fall. The omen of Ibi-Sin, found again in the victim's entrails, could portend nothing but ruin, the sight

of a basilisk in the city meant the destruction of Ur, and the well-remembered complexion of the heavens has preserved in literature the only records of the catastrophe—"if there is an eclipse of the moon on the fourteenth of the month Adar, beginning in the south and ending in the north, beginning in the first watch and ending in the last watch, its obscuration visible with the south before thee, this is an omen for the king of universal dominion; ravaging of Ur, destruction of its walls, destruction of the city and its habitations." [20] Another omen is even more explicit and descriptive—"if the Yoke-star rises with its face towards the west, and looks at the face of heaven and no wind blows at all, there will be famine, the ruler will meet the fate of Ibi-Sin, king of Ur, who went in captivity to Elam." [21] Thus it was not Ishbi-Irra, after all, for whom the victory was reserved, but the enemy on the other flank. When Ashurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria, invaded Elam and captured Susa, about 640 B.C., he brought away from there the statue of the goddess Nanâ, which had been in exile, he says, from her own city of Erech for 1,635 years, having been carried away by the Elamite king Kudur-nankhundi when he raided the land of Akkad. On this reckoning Erech was captured about the year 2275, and since the fall of Ur must be dated, according to some, at about this time or in any case not very long after, the name of Ibi-Sin's victorious opponent is thus perhaps revealed. Nanâ of Erech was less happy than the Moon-god

of Ur himself, who was recovered from Elam a bare half-century after his city's downfall.*

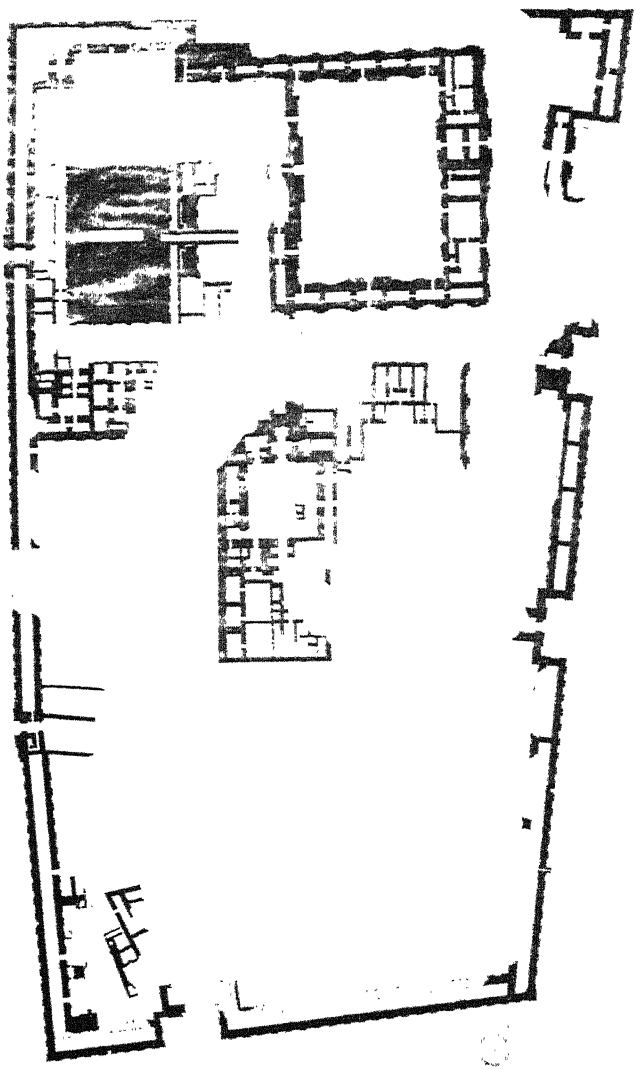
Excavation has not failed to show plenty of the scars which the city suffered at this disaster. The custom of restoring temples throughout many centuries upon exactly the same ground plan has generally imposed later walls upon the stumps of the Third Dynasty buildings, but nearly everywhere these are ruined almost down to the foundations, and objects belonging to that time are exceedingly few, and wilfully mutilated; statues were shivered into fragments and the great stone stele which Ur-Nammu had carved and inscribed in memory of his greatest building was so industriously smashed that little of it was even left strewn near the place where it stood. Only the stage-tower itself defied with its enormous mass the utmost fury of the conquerors, as it has defied Nature and man till the present day. Despite destruction and later overlayings, however, it is still possible to regain some notion of the city's appearance, or at least of its plan, under the Third Dynasty, and since this is the first time that it can begin to appear in its physical form, it will not be amiss to describe here a few of its contemporary features.

The Third Dynasty, as befitted the most powerful line that ever reigned at Ur, has left to the city its one abiding monument. In no age, since the days of Ur-Nammu until the present, has the ziggurrat ever been lost or even much obscured.

* See below, p. 150.

It is this huge pile which formed the core of what was until lately a steep mound of ruins, high above the lower, tumbled hillocks which cover the rest of the ancient site. Amid the dead flats stretching illimitably all around, this veritable mountain at once attracted the eye, and closer inspection soon revealed that what seemed at first an isolated knoll was no whim of nature, but the decayed handiwork of man. Not only was the side of the mound strewn thick with broken and crumbled brick, but at each corner a glimpse of standing masonry was always to be caught, and the top showed clearly a rough brick flooring still in position. So conspicuous was this place and so clear its artificial character that it had drawn the notice of an Italian traveller in the seventeenth century, though destined to remain untouched for another two centuries. Even the Arabs of the neighbourhood, noticing the kind of mortar used in the brickwork had always known the ruin as " the pitchy mound " (Tell al-Muqayyar). It was at the corners of this building that Mr. J. E. Taylor, exploring it in 1854, had found four small clay cylinders (pl. 32*a*) bearing an inscription of Nabonidus, last native king of Babylon, which revealed to the astonishment of the world that this desolate spot in a forgotten land was no other than the famous city of Ur.

Since 1919, when a beginning was made with the extrication of the tower from the steep banks of *débris* which enveloped it, and particularly since 1924, when this operation was completed, the vast



Plan of the *temenos*, or sacred area at Ur, with the buildings that had been excavated in it up to the end of the season 1926-1927. This plan shews their

structure (pl. 20) has come back to life, truncated, indeed, and sadly defaced, but yet as clear in its main outlines, and as solid in its mass as when the builders left it. Nothing, indeed, could be more impressive than the slow emergence of its great architectural features as the obscuring earth was gradually shifted away, and the triple staircases on the north-east side revealed themselves from the top downwards, with most of the brick steps still in position and scarcely damaged since the day when the very last inhabitants had turned away from the already ruined city, and the desert had gradually flowed in to fill all their places. The ziggurrat, as now seen, is by far the best preserved of all those which once rose over every considerable Babylonian city. Its base measurements of 65 × 43 metres, and the remains of the four stages or "steps" in which it was built, testify to its mass, while the remains of bright colouring which distinguished each of the stages, and the great stairways already mentioned, still hold something of its former majesty. The whole building was once crowned with a small temple built entirely of blue-enamelled bricks, which has now quite disappeared, leaving only the fallen brickwork still bright with its rich colour, but the red and black of the lower stages may yet be clearly seen.

The symbolism of these colours, as, indeed, the precise use of the tower in religion, is unexplained. Herodotus, in his account of Babylon, relates certain of the rites which were

performed upon it, but was, of course, uninformed of the significance of what he describes, while the lame explanation of other Greek writers, that these towers were built simply for astronomical observations, betrays the superstition of the age and the ignorance of the authors. The surprisingly little that is to be gained from Babylonian literature upon this head obscurely hints that all the ideas connected with the ziggurrat were cosmological, and found their plainest expression in the ceremonies performed at the beginning of each New Year, when, for eleven days, there was carried on a sacred representation, in successive episodes, of the triumph, death, and resurrection, of the city-god. Nearly all of the available evidence refers, of course, to Babylon itself, and its god Bêl-Marduk, but there is enough to suggest that a similar story was told with similar ritual of the chief god in other cities; at Ur it would naturally be of Nannar, the Moon-god. In fact, two festivals of this kind (called *akitu*) at Ur are mentioned in the temple-accounts as occasions for sacrifice, and we have copies of inscriptions which Ibi-Sin wrote upon gold vessels for use at the New Year. Why it was proper for the Moon-god to have a second celebration while one sufficed for Marduk at Babylon cannot at present be explained. If it was the principal object of the ziggurrat to play the part of the "mountain" which has so much importance in the story of the dead and resurgent god, it would follow that the great pile was actually a miniature world, for it was in the

form of a mountain that the Babylonians imagined the earth to be cast. With this conception one, at least, of the applied colours is in harmony, for the topmost building was entirely of deep blue enamelled brick, which thus sat like the blue heaven upon the universe. To attempt to find in the black and red stages, and the white terrace underneath, the black earth floating on the white ocean (*apsu*) of the underworld, and separated from heaven by the sun-kindled (red) air, would be to follow speculation too blindly; it is better to leave explanation for the future.

Happily, there is no such mystery about the actual building of this great work as there is about its purpose. Nabonidus, whose inscribed cylinders identified both the building and the city, says that it was begun by Ur-Nammu and finished by his son Shulgi, and that he himself repaired it. The tower itself tells its own history in more detail. Practically the whole of the thick outer walling which contains the crude earth of the core is made of admirably baked, square, flat bricks, tenaciously mortared together with bitumen, which was given additional hold, every few courses, by the insertion of reed matting thoroughly soaked and plastered with the same. Nearly all of these bricks are stamped with a neat, square. inscription in the middle: "Ur-Nammu, king of Ur, who built the temple of Nannar." Of his son's work in completion of the great design there is scarcely a trace; but that is no doubt because the vast stock of bricks was kept well in advance of the progress of

actual building, so that Ur-Nammu had already prepared and stamped enough for Shulgi to continue the laying after his death. Moreover, since the upper stages would naturally be the last built, and yet the first to suffer decay, a good deal of Shulgi's work may have been removed by later restorers. As the ziggurrat left his hands so it remained for no less than sixteen hundred years, and, indeed, so it has remained substantially until the present day, more than four thousand years! The repairs undertaken by later kings were never more than superficial. About the end of the second millennium a little patching was done by Adad-apal-idinnam, king of Babylon, and again by a local governor, Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi, in the middle of the seventh century. The work of Nabonidus, however, was rather more extensive, being part of a considerable programme of repairs both to the structure and to the organization of the temple. It is evident that he found the ziggurrat much dilapidated, though still sound in the main, and his repairs show clearly the parts which had most suffered decay. The treads and balustrades of the stairways were replaced throughout, though with bricks distinctly inferior in quality to the original, the third stage was refaced, and the shrine on the top entirely rebuilt in fine blue enamelled brick; whether these had been used by Ur-Nammu it is impossible to say, since no trace of his work remains. After the sixth century nothing more was done to the tower, which fell into slow ruin until Taylor first began to extricate it.



THE STEPS FROM THE NORTH CORNER OF THE ZIGGURRAT UP TO ITS FIRST STAGE (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, V, pl. IV)

It is impossible to separate from any account of the ziggurrat some mention of a contemporary monument which illustrates its building. Scattered in confusion about the courtyard of a building adjoining the southern corner of the terrace on which the ziggurrat stood were found many fragments of sculptured stone, which, when reassembled, made up certain portions of a great round-topped slab, carved on both sides with five separate scenes each, and an inscription of which little survives but the names of some canals. Before wilful destruction shattered it, this memorial must have been among the most notable sights of the city, both from its size (some 9 feet by 4 feet) and the excellence of its carving. Of all its scenes, only one is now preserved in tolerable completeness, but there are several fragments of others which, taken together, allow the general sense of the monument to be divined. It was, indeed, a kind of pictorial record of Ur-Nammu's building activities about the temple of his god, and of the ceremonies which preceded them.

The elaborate descriptions left by rulers so far separated in time, but so near in custom, as Gudea and Nabonidus have made us familiar with the exaggerated scrupulosity of kings to search out the will of the god before they presumed to set their hand even to the pious acts of rebuilding temples and making dedications. A natural phenomenon —perhaps the failure of the water-supply—first announced the displeasure of the god at the neglect of his worship. Such a mischance became at once

the prince's care. He sought out, by all the means which religion and magic afforded him, what was the god's pleasure, and, whether it was indeed he who was designated to fulfil it: "whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house, but thy son. . ." Gudea obtained his oracle by a dream, wherein he saw himself as an ass appointed to bear the burden which the god laid upon him. Nabonidus found his destiny written in the quivering hieroglyphics of the victim's entrails, and such an answer was sought by Ur-Nammu also, for one of the scenes upon his monument shows a beast thrown upon its back and slaughtered, while the augur bends to thrust his hand into its bowels and to read there the decision of heaven. But the two clearest of the pictures (pl. 18*a*) that remain are occupied by the immediate preliminaries of the work. In one the king stands successively before the Moon-god and his wife and pours a libation. He is accepted by their welcoming gestures, and the god extends towards him a ring, together with a measuring-line and rod, the architect's instruments, such as Ezekiel saw in his vision of a man "with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring-reed." Directly under this sculpture came the next scene, of which only a corner is preserved, but this is enough to reveal the king, led once more into the presence of the god, but this time carrying pick and basket and the other tools with which to make a ceremonial beginning of the actual work. A

servant obsequiously eases the royal shoulder of its burden, but later the king himself would mould the first brick and carry up the first basket of earth to raise the terrace, an attitude in which he would represent himself by the peg-shaped copper figures (cf. pl. 25) which were buried with his foundation tablets. Yet another scene has retained just enough fragments to show the base and upper part of a ladder reared against the rising wall of the ziggurrat, and men approaching with baskets of earth on their heads, to keep the interior filling level as the courses of brick were laid. Some further registers of the stele probably figured dedication-rites after the completion of the work, but too little is preserved to be intelligible. In setting up such a monument Ur-Nammu was, indeed, only following a frequent custom of powerful rulers, zealous to display the military or civil glories of their reign, but his work, impressive even in its present ruin, is a welcome witness to the artistic powers of the Third Dynasty, which, by reason of the utter destruction which overtook it, and of the mere chance of modern discovery, has been very unworthily represented in its products as known hitherto. This, however, is a remark which applies to much else besides the material remains. For an empire so splendid as to leave its mark upon many later generations there is surprisingly little to tell of its greatness now; scarce any history, little art, and no literature beyond the endless cumber of accountancy. And yet there must have been all of these in abundance.

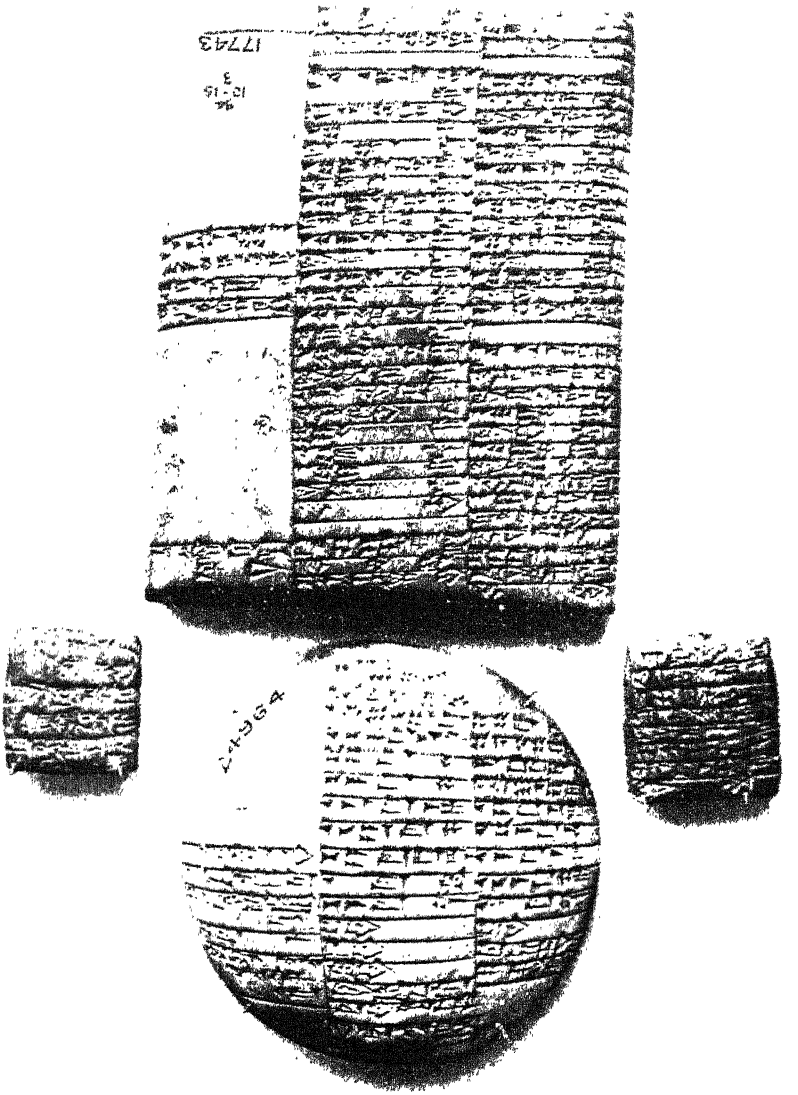
The ziggurrat is the one great lasting feature of the Third Dynasty city; for the rest, there is rather evidence of buildings which were than any considerable remains of them. Both actual discovery and the testimony of inscriptions have suggested that the seat of empire was at that time not unworthy of its rulers, but it would little profit to set down a string of names, partly unlocated, or to trace painfully the few foundation-courses of brick which is generally all that the fury of enemies and the restorations of later kings have left visible. It is true that only the core of the city, the area of the Moon-god's temple, has so far been explored, but since it is certain that the official, and therefore the most solid and magnificent, buildings were there concentrated, it is most unlikely that more of the older work yet remains in the ordinary dwelling-quarters, where the structures would be of a much flimsier and less permanent nature. Nothing, again, can ever be expected to illustrate the great works of canal digging and drainage executed by these kings. Within the temple-area, which was itself less extensive than that which the *temenos*-wall of Nebuchadrezzar afterwards enclosed, everything was somewhat closely grouped around the terrace upon which the ziggurrat stood. This terrace itself was heaped up by Ur-Nammu as the first step of the tower proper, which rose in four more steps to the top, as already described. On the north-east side of this lay a wide space, extending the full length of the terrace wall, and this was probably occupied then, as certainly

later, by a great courtyard with chambers all round it, and a principal entrance almost in the middle of the long side opposite to the terrace.* The purpose of this, most spacious of the buildings at Ur, is yet to be established, for it has neither the plan nor the equipment of a temple, and does not seem even to have had direct access to the top of the terrace; the suggestion has been made that it was the warehouse for the reception of dues brought to the god, its wide courtyard and surrounding store-chambers being, in fact, on the plan which such places have followed in the East up to the present day. Here, the level of the Third Dynasty has only just been reached, but, if such proves to be its purpose, the building is likely to be found well stocked with the records, small and great, of the traffic which passed in and out of the temple's warehouse and offices. Other parts of the site have already produced a fair number of these account-tablets, the most characteristic relics of this period, which have formerly been found in great multitude at other cities of Sumer, especially at Lagash which appears to have been a great junction of cross-country routes, and at the place now called Drehem, where stood the depot for the convoys bringing innumerable offerings to the temples of Nippur from all over the empire.

It would be impossible to present, in any reasonable space, a description of the contents of this voluminous commercial clerk-work (pl. 21), disappointing if considered as the only surviving

* See below, pp. 198 ff.

literature of the Third Dynasty, but not uninstructive if searched for details concerning history, religious organization, and daily life. The value of the dating formulae has already been observed, but it is worth while to add that local customs prevailed to some extent even in this purely official matter, since each city used certain month-names peculiar to itself, though all had to find room in their calendars for the "feast of the divine Shulgi" when the cult of that monarch was imposed by law, or embraced by adulation. A rather small number of the tablets are deeds in full legal form, recording sales and loans of slaves or commodities, and still fewer relate the pleadings, the testimony, and the verdict given before judges in regular courts; but these are sufficient to prove the existence of a definite legal system, based upon well-understood laws which, even if not written (for no fragment of this date has yet been found) were none the less established. Indeed, it is almost certain that the laws, which begin to appear, still couched in the Sumerian language, under the succeeding dynasties of Isin and Larsa, and upon the enforcement of which kings of those cities pride themselves, were merely the restatement, perhaps only the committal to writing, of customs which had long been accepted, doubtless even before the empire of Ur, and Hammurabi's celebrated code is no more than an enlarged and ordered collection of the same kind, drawn up, it may be surmised, both in Sumerian and Akkadian, though the latter only has been preserved. The




ACCOUNT-TABLETS OF THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR:

(top) List of quantities of barley from various farmers; reign of Shulgi
(*bottom*) Round, convex tablet inscribed with surveys of the area and produce of farms; reign of Bur-Sin

remainder, the great majority, of the commercial tablets are formally of less interest, being almost exclusively mere entries of amounts, or small receipts and bills given to payers or drawers of goods. Some of these lists are, however, of great elaboration. A large tablet may contain the accounts of a temple for the whole of one or more months, showing all the receipts and payments, which are totalled at the end, and set one against the other for the final balance.

It emerges from these accounts that the great holders of property under the Third Dynasty were the temples of the city-gods, or rather the gods themselves, as the usage of the time expressed it, and there is, of course, ample evidence that the same was true both of earlier and of later ages. The god kept a household, indeed a court, and was ministered to not only by humbler gods but by a throng of priests, with functions and perquisites as nicely defined as always when the courtier's is a recognized profession. To maintain this state a somewhat unspiritual concern with lucre was requisite, and the god's mortal servants derived, in fact, ample revenues not merely from the royal, tributary, and private bounties which supplied the "food" of the god, but from exploitation and usury of the accumulated funds. For this purpose they conducted manufactures as well as farming, employing the temple slaves upon the temple materials or lands, and acted as bankers to profane landowners and merchants, advancing seed-corn,

metals, or commodities, at very substantial interest. The only possessor comparable with the gods was the king himself, who was able to make truly royal donations, to gods whose favour was especially desired, without impairing his enormous wealth. Of the state of the remaining population it is hard to speak, since there is not available for this period any such guide to social conditions as the Hammurabi Code supplies for a somewhat later age. In particular, the humbler ingenuous classes remain almost invisible; being, indeed, at all times in Babylonia the people of whom least is seen. Under the Third Dynasty of Ur they supplied, perhaps, some of the minor officials who appear everywhere in the tablets as scribes, accounting clerks, checkers, overseers, and messengers, though it is, indeed, uncertain whether most of these were not, in fact, of servile condition. But, if the analogy of two or three centuries afterwards may be used—and social arrangements changed little and slowly—a great many of these humbler freemen were maintained in the king's service on small holdings of land, which they enjoyed by direct grant from the throne in return for feudal obligations, whether military or civilian, and it is therefore likely that employments of some trust had to be found for many of these in peaceful vocations.

As to the slave population it was very numerous indeed, no doubt far in excess of the free. Not merely had the temples their rolls of agricultural labourers to till and irrigate the broad

lands of the gods' domains, but also a great indoor staff engaged in manufactures—weaving, metal-working, carpentry, and other crafts—both to supply the needs of the cult and of the workers, as well as perhaps to sell in the open market. Kings and nobles must have kept households not less comprehensive than these, and there were probably but few free men, however modest their condition, who had not two or three bondmen to labour on their farms or plantations and in their houses. There is not much to be gathered as to the origin of these slaves, but it is not clear that foreign conquest was the main source of supply. By far the greater number bear Sumerian or Akkadian names, and, though these may have been assumed in some cases for convenience, it is still most likely that the bulk of the slave population was native, or at any rate the offspring of two or three generations descended from parents who had been captured from abroad, or enslaved in the city-wars which had been endemic since very ancient days, and stilled only for short intervals when a power, like the Third Dynasty itself, was able to impose the peace of a common subjection.

Certain tribes are, however, to be discerned as the furnishers of slaves to the ruling power. They dwelt in the two directions to which the arms of Ur were carried, the mountainous country to the east of the Tigris, and the plains of the upper course of the Euphrates. Since long distant days the Sumerians had been used to obtain slaves from the land called

Amurru, that is, roughly, from the north Syrian desert, and a fair number of these are found, specified as such, in the account-tablets. They may be the figures who are seen on some of the monuments of this time, especially on a fragment of the great stele of Ur-Nammu, employed in humble duties such as milking a cow; they wore a short, knee-long, skirt with a belt, and apparently a head-cloth secured by a band round the head and falling over the shoulders till it reaches the belt behind. They are best shown in the small figures of strangers bringing offerings, sculptured on the base of a statue of Ur-Ningirsu,[22] the son of Gudea, and there they have undeniably something of the appearance of the modern Arabs; these, then, may be the "Amorite" slaves, such as are found among the population in the Third Dynasty. Usually they have not distinctive names, but have adopted those of the country, either Sumerian or Akkadian, of the mixed but united population among which they worked. Herein they differ markedly from some of the drovers who brought cattle from the mountainous districts called Gutium and Subartu, roughly embracing the hill-country between the modern towns of Kirkuk and Hulwan. The names of these men, found upon the receipts given for the cattle tribute sent by their masters to the gods of Nippur, betray the barbarous tongue of their remote tribes, little affected at that time by the culture of the plains. Though much prized as slaves, they were probably not very numerous in the land, for

expeditions against the "wide-spread Subaraeans," who dwelt not only east of the Tigris, but also covered the great plains of northern Mesopotamia, were too distant for the southern empire to undertake, and do not become common until the rise of Assyria, whose people had much in common, both of race and nature, with these rude neighbours.

## CHAPTER V

# THE RULE OF ISIN, LARSA, AND BABYLON

THE kingdom of Ur now passed officially to Ishbi-Irra and his successors who ruled at Isin, a city hitherto unimportant,[23] which has not yet been satisfactorily located. There is no doubt that it was very close to the more famous Nippur, since the goddess of the place made an annual journey by boat to the greater sanctuary, which was actually visible from the place where she embarked. Why the new rulers settled at a capital hitherto so undistinguished there is no knowing, but by this choice Isin took its place as the legitimate successor of those proud old "cities of royalty" in which the sovereignty had resided since before the Flood. With Isin their tale is closed, for the great Sumerian list of kings was drawn up under this dynasty, and all our copies of it are concluded with the reign of one of its later members. The kingdom of Isin, moreover, did not differ from its forerunners in the further respect that it was largely nominal. Founded by the leader of one group among many which were pressing southwards down the Euphrates in the last years of the Third Ur

Dynasty, it succeeded to the estimation of the latter, but by no means to its authority. For whereas the empire of the kings of Ur had embraced not merely the whole of Sumer and Akkad, but great territories east of the Tigris, and the land of Assyria, and was effective also some distance up the Euphrates, their titular successors at Isin never enjoyed more than a local sway. The first five of them retained, indeed, the title "king of Sumer and Akkad," but subject only to reservations of which they must have been very conscious, and when it was still used at the end of the dynasty it was little better than a farce. In fact, directly upon the fall of Ibi-Sin, or very shortly after it, there was set up a rival power in Larsa, which, though it never disputed the formal right of Isin to be regarded as the inheritor of the supremacy, from the first opposed, and at the last completely eclipsed, its authority.

A certain Naplanum was the chief of those who had taken possession of Larsa, which he ruled for more than twenty years, before handing on his rule to a long line of successors. At first the kings of Larsa were purely local potentates, and, though perhaps hardly even in name subject to Isin, could not boast even the modest dominion of their rivals. The position was decisively reversed when the failure of the direct line at Isin brought about internal dissension and weakness, which coincided with the presence of an energetic prince at Larsa, to raise the latter city to predominance. Hardly was this

accomplished, however, when a third competitor appeared in the new power of Babylon, destined eventually to prevail over both. This also was the period of other small lords who exalted themselves with impunity over single cities such as Kish, Erech, and Kazallu, and engaged in petty hostilities against each other, unhindered by any superior power which could constrain them to abate their pretensions and keep the peace. The division which had befallen the land and the imbecility of the local tyrants are aptly displayed by the inscription of one Ashduni-arim, king of Kish,[24] a man obviously of foreign birth and recent arrival, for he bears a name belonging to the alien race and tongue of northern Mesopotamia. In a style of pompous futility he relates how his campaigns had reduced his army to three hundred men, when the gods intervened definitely on his behalf, in reliance upon whom he took with him a whole week's provisions, and in four days "subdued the enemy's land," and though "the four quarters of the world rose up" against him he built a wall and dredged a canal! In short, the collapse of the great empire of Ur left its world in fragments, none of which was great enough to gather the others to itself again, but all jarring against each were soon ground to nothing, and a new potter, when he was found in Hammurabi, had to refashion the whole.

Although Ur was counted hardly less than Isin the capital of the kingdom, its condition at this time must have been grievous. Every building

that is explored by the spade of modern research has to tell of the calamity which fell upon the city when the Elamites burst in. A few courses of bricks, generally overlaid with the successive foundations of later builders, are all that remain of the Third Dynasty walls, and the smaller monuments, in which the city must so richly have abounded, are no more; the few that were not carried away, such as the great stele of Ur-Nammu, were industriously smashed and their fragments scattered. Nothing, indeed, is more surprising than the fewness of the remnants which now represent Ur's greatest epoch, and this can be due to nothing but the barbarous thoroughness of the sack and destruction. It is even possible that the new kings were obliged to choose another city as their seat because Ur, the prestige of which they were fully disposed to inherit, was found by them little better than a heap of ruins. Nor did they much exert themselves to repair its calamities; not until the city had passed definitely away from the rule of Isin to that of Larsa did its temples rise from their wrecks, and its fortunes from their downfall. Of Ishbi-Irra, though he "had no rival," nothing at all is known after his initial success against Ibi-Sin. Very few of the Isin date-formulae have as yet been recovered, and even those which are extant treat of little more than the appointment of priests and the dedication of statues. There are several religious compositions designed for the official cult of the Isin kings from Idin-Dagan to Ur-Enurta, but they are eloquent only in empty

adulation of the might and beneficence of these princes, barren of any mention of specific achievement. Excavation, too, has failed to discover at Ur any considerable trace, material or written, of their works, and it is a fair conclusion that they did little to prove themselves worthy of a possession which they were so soon to lose.

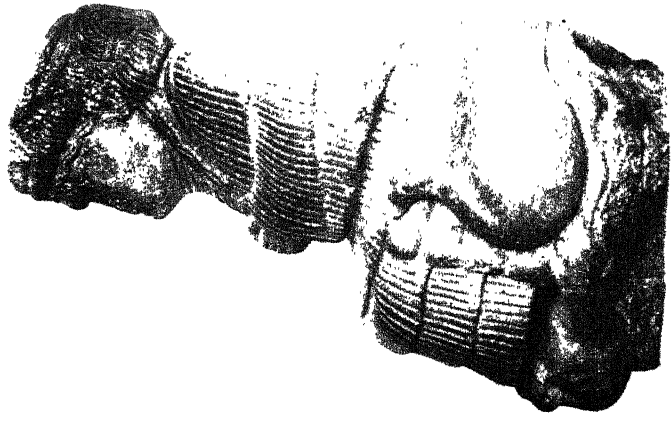
Gimil-ilishu, the second of his line, has two works to his credit. He repaired the ancient gateway and shrine called E-dublal-makh, which led from a lower level up by stairs to the terrace upon which the ziggurrat was founded, and where, as appears from several inscriptions, the judges had been wont to sit, guiding their sentences by reference to the court archives kept there, for E-dublal-makh signifies "house of the great collection of tablets." This place, at once shrine, gateway, and court-house, was perhaps even older than the Third Dynasty, but its earliest substantial remains are the lowest courses of walls raised by Bur-Sin, who also left a long dedication upon gate-sockets in which he alludes with grim significance to one purpose which he meant the building to serve, "his place of judgment, his net from which the enemy of Bur-Sin escapes not." [25] Gimil-ilishu now set his hand to repairing this, and raised its great door anew on fresh stones adorned with his own inscription,[26] in which he relates that he also brought back (the statue of) Nannar from Anshan to Ur. Unlike Nanâ of Erech, who remained in exile until recovered by Ashurbanipal, the Moon-

god had been less than forty years absent from his city. But if Gimil-ilishu was able to restore the god he must have prepared already a home for him, so that this king's undertakings were doubtless more extensive than discovery as yet indicates. He may well have obtained the return of the statue by diplomatic rather than warlike means.

Idin-Dagan, the next king, is not known to have left any memorial of his rule at Ur beyond a few votive offerings, but his son, Ishme-Dagan, was more active. He completed, or perhaps had to rebuild, his grandfather's edifice of E-dublal-makh, and the whole core of the building as it stands to-day was his work, which has been reinforced, some centuries later, by Kurigalzu. The most notable result of Ishme-Dagan's attention to this structure was a change of plan, which transformed what had been a gatehouse leading up to the terrace of the ziggurrat into a separate temple with outer and inner rooms by the simple expedient of raising a wall across the back of it. Though ceasing thus to be a gate, E-dublal-makh continued to be described as one, and no doubt still served as a law-court, which, to oriental thinking, could scarcely be held anywhere but in a gate. No other building of importance can as yet be ascribed to Ishme-Dagan, but the religious life of the city had certainly revived by his time, since he was able not only to offer vases as presents to the god, but had also, following an ancient custom, installed his son, Enannatum, as high priest of the Moon-god. This prelate is known by several inscriptions, some of

which reveal a curious state of political affairs. The dignity and wealth of his office entitled him to build, and to use foundation-deposits and bricks inscribed with his own name. His principal achievement was the complete renewal of the temple, or temple-complex, called Gipar-ku, sacred to Nin-gal, the wife of the god. This square mass of courts and chambers, planned so that its corners lay towards the cardinal points, flanked the S.W. side of Dub-lal-makh, and contained within itself two separate temples as well as a host of private or storage rooms, among which the well-preserved remains of a kitchen with some of its accessories was found. Another small room was occupied by three stone slabs, one set upon end against the wall, the other two laid flat in front of it. Upon all three the name of Bur-Sin had been written and then partially obliterated; it seems as though they had been set up as a memorial, or even to serve in the worship of the former builder, and had been re-erected by the piety of Enannatum. But the Gipar-ku yielded more than the highly developed plan of a Sumerian temple, for under its floors were found many fine objects, rather of antiquity already when the temple was restored than of contemporary workmanship. The Isin period is, however, represented in sculpture by the statuette of Nin-gal (pl. 22*b*) dedicated by Enannatum himself. It has suffered so much by wilful mutilation that its merits or defects are not easy to appraise, but it seems to have been a tolerable performance. Much more complete,





though less pleasing in execution, is the diorite statuette of the goddess Gula (pl. 22*a*) seated upon four geese which bear her over water, which is perhaps the ocean of the sky. She wears a robe of horizontal flounces forming seven tiers from shoulders to feet, her hands are clasped, her hair falls in two locks over her shoulders and she had originally a headdress, probably of gold, which has disappeared. In spite of its interest as a subject the figure, which ought most likely to be ascribed to the Isin-Larsa period, is clumsy work, and compares ill with a beautiful female head of the Third Dynasty, found in this same building, and an even earlier marble head with inlaid eyes.

What is remarkable in Enannatum's inscriptions is that his works are dedicated not for the life of Libit-Ishtar of Isin, his brother (or possibly uncle), but on behalf of Gungunum, whom he calls "king of Ur," while describing himself as "son of Ishme-Dagan, king of Sumer and Akkad." The distinction is instructive; formal primacy still remained, it appears, with the kings of Isin, but the control of Ur passed away to Larsa at some time during, or immediately after, the reign of Libit-Ishtar, fifth member of his dynasty. His are the last Isin dates which have been read upon business documents as yet found in Ur, and there are also some traces of his buildings there, and inscribed cones relating to his appointment of a son to one of the priesthoods. But his interests and acts, all of a parochial kind (though his measures for the improvement of legal administration probably

deserved the respect he felt for them), were more and more confined to his own cities of Isin and Nippur, and though his titulary claims dominion over Ur, Eridu, and Erech as well, his authority was flimsy, and he evidently had little interest in cities which he knew himself incapable of holding against any serious challenge. This came with the rise of Gungunum to the throne of Larsa as successor to four *rois fainéants* so undistinguished that no act of theirs is recorded ; with Gungunum, as a man of other mettle, the year-dates begin.[27]

Meanwhile, Libit-Ishtar was ending his reign, probably in feebleness, and he was the last of his line. The crown of Isin was assumed by Ur-Enurta, who was not, indeed, entirely shiftless (since campaigns of his both in east and west were remembered), but was at any rate unable to sustain the nominal supremacy of Isin, and Ur fell, or rather was abandoned, to Gungunum, who was acknowledged there when Enannatum was enriching the city with his new buildings. The process of transfer is obscure, but it seems to have been almost uncontested, for the year-dates of Gungunum make no allusion to a forcible seizure, but only to appointment of priests and offerings of statues, as by the legitimate lord of the city. Indeed, the relations of Isin and Larsa, throughout the long span of about two centuries in which they dwelt side by side, do not seem to have become very seriously embroiled until the end of that time, when Rim-Sin set himself to wipe out the rival of which his predecessors seem scarcely to have

been conscious; but by then the threat of another and far more formidable kingdom had made it indispensable for Larsa to consolidate all her power, and to remove the complication of a third actor, which had, moreover, already thrown in its lot with the principal enemy. Meantime, the later kings of Isin seem to have been so insignificant that they hardly aroused jealousy; in any case, the fate of Ur is yoked with that of Larsa from the reign of Gungunum until the defeat of Rim-Sin by Hammurabi of Babylon, for although the first two successors of Libit-Ishtar persisted in a formal claim to lordship over the city they had, in fact, no influence there.

Between the end of Isin's rule at Ur and the rise of an Elamite family to power as the last members of the Larsa dynasty there is little either in general or local history to claim attention. At least a jejune outline of the course of these years is yielded by the Larsa year-dates, most of which have now been recovered. The reigns of Gungunum and of his two successors were not lacking in vigour and success, but were occupied with wars only in a rather noticeably low proportion; only once was there a short-lived conflict with Isin. The frequent dedications of costly objects in the temples betray a recovering prosperity, and the same tale is told by the occurrence of private business documents in growing numbers, always the most reliable barometer of the land's fortunes which the modern student is still able to consult, for commercial activity was intensely sensitive, then as now, to

strength or weakness of government, and these conditions are most faithfully reflected in the wealth or rarity of the "contracts" by which the various epochs are represented in modern collections. From Gungunum onwards there is a rather thin but uninterrupted stream of these through the succeeding reigns, but the volume increases enormously towards the last half-century of the dynasty under the powerful rule of Rim-Sin, and is not even checked by his eventual fall, since the government passes immediately into the still more capable hands of Hammurabi, and business continues to flourish until it is rudely dislocated again by the reverses of his son.

Ur was not without its share in the general recovery, though the healing of the great disaster which had fallen upon it made but slow progress. Reconstruction had been begun without much energy by the first Isin kings, and was carried on slowly by their Larsa supplanters. A fair amount of canal-digging, upon which the city was especially dependent, was taken in hand; priests were appointed and royal offerings made, but there is not much, either in the date-formulae or in the results of excavation, that tells of extensive rebuilding before the days of the two Elamite brothers, whose reigns closed the Larsa dynasty. It was a building which adjoined the south corner of the ziggurrat-terrace, called E-nun-makh, which received most attention from the successors of Gungunum. Its origin, like that of nearly all the temples, was in remote antiquity, but Bur-Sin,

of the Third Dynasty, has left the earliest datable work in its walls, and it was upon his destroyed foundations that the kings of Larsa built; this work, to which Enannatum, Nur-Adad, and Sin-iddinnam all seem to have contributed, was finished by Kudur-Mabuk. The plan is peculiar; it shows a small shrine of five chambers surrounded by a passage serving a great range of long storerooms. Here the god dwelt at times among his possessions, for the inscriptions call E-nun-makh "the house of silver and gold," or the storehouse of the Moon-god, which character is also attested by the remnants of ancient votive vessels found in it, and by many specimens of accounts kept of its divers revenues. Certainly the statues and symbols bestowed upon the god by the Larsa kings were far too precious to be placed in temples which must have been mostly in ruins still, and their desire to finish E-nun-makh may have been due to the necessity of having at least one safe repository for their donations. A record of work done upon this building by Nur-Adad, third successor of Gungunum, gives a momentary glimpse of an incident which must have violently stirred the peaceful life of the city at this time. That king's year-dates are mostly lost, but one which survives, embedded in this inscription, refers the building to an occasion "when he cast out the rebellious Na'id-Shamash and did good to Ur"; the whole history of this episode is thus inadequately conveyed. From the second statement it might be gathered that Na'id-Shamash was not a local

resident who raised a sedition among the townspeople, but an upstart from outside who succeeded for a moment in controlling and oppressing the city, so that the reassertion of the lawful authority was regarded as a deliverance.

Two more known events marked these centuries of rather stagnant peace under the Larsa kings, apart from the gradual reconstruction of the city and its waterways. From the distant city of Ashur has come the broken record of an Assyrian king's first intervention in the south, a premature foretaste of the conquering expeditions which were to bring all Babylonia under Assyrian domination many centuries later. In this record a certain Ilushuma says that he "established the freedom of the Akkadians and their sons . . . at Ur, Nippur, Awal, Kismar, Der of the god . . . as far as the city-state of Ashur I established their freedom." The "freedom" intended is exemption from taxation and compulsory service, but nothing is known of the reason, occasion, or even result of Ilushuma's raid; why, and with what justice, did he represent himself as a benefactor to the citizens of a strange land? The interest of this solitary incident is for the present no more than that of a dramatic witness to the rise of Assyria (or the abasement of Babylonia) since the days of the Third Dynasty. But the first words of a chronicle, otherwise lost, ran "Ilushuma, king of Assyria, in the time of Su(mu)-abu," and this, as well as dating the raid, leads directly to the second of the known events of this age mentioned

above. Soon after the accession of Sumu-ilum to the throne of Larsa and Ur another western immigrant set himself up as an independent prince in the city of Babylon, afterwards to be so famous, but as yet vaguely mentioned only in one or two traditions of Sargon and Shulgi; a place of great sanctity, indeed, as the abode of Marduk, son of the healing Water-god of Eridu, but not hitherto of much secular importance. Sumu-abum, the new-comer in question, doubtless took advantage of the imbecility of the Isin rulers, already discovered by their loss of Ur, to found a new kingdom in territory which had been under their nominal control, and his estimate of their spirit, or their power, was so fully confirmed that there is no sign of this open defiance being actively resented in any way. The creature of a day thus unchallenged seated himself on a throne, and instituted the First Dynasty of Babylon, in face of a line of kings already about a century and a half old in authority.

For the political relations of the three powers which thus divided the land there is, unluckily, very little evidence. So far as this is a question of general history it does not greatly concern us here, but since Ur, as one of the principal seats of the Larsa power, was soon to be so vitally affected by the foreign relations of her kings, it is necessary to consider what was their attitude towards the new rulers of Babylon, for which inquiry there is only the scanty information of the year-dates. It would be natural, however, to expect hostility, not only because Babylon represented the north,

with connexions up the Euphrates, while Ur and Larsa were southern cities in closer touch with the marsh-lands at the head of the Persian Gulf, and with the districts up to and beyond the Tigris, but also because Babylon and Larsa were the only real powers, Isin being left rather as a prize for the victor than as a serious competitor. Such small indications as can be obtained from the date-formulae [28] do, in fact, strengthen this probability. Sumu-abum, the first king of Babylon, was not much stirring abroad, but he extended his authority, either by actual absorption or by close alliance, over his neighbour city of Kish, and this step appears to have provoked the jealousy of Larsa, for the contemporary king, Sumu-ilum, sent a punitive force against Kish, and had enough success to boast of his victory in the designations of three successive years. That hapless city was now between the anvil and the hammer, for the king of Babylon soon afterwards took vengeance upon it again for its forced temporary defection. Apart from this, no collisions are reported until the years immediately preceding the final struggle. Meantime several reigns in both cities, and some seventy years, elapsed.

Absence of internecine strife over so long a period cannot be ascribed to mutual forbearance, and therefore must have been due to some external influence. What this was we are too meagrely informed to make out with any certainty, but, apart from the sudden incursion of the Assyrian king, an obvious suggestion

presents itself. It is a noticeable fact that both Larsa and Babylon are much concerned at this time with the city of Kazallu, against which both Sumu-ilum of Larsa, and the first three kings of Babylon, engage in strenuous combats. Little is known otherwise of this place; it is supposed to have lain in the hill-country east of the Tigris, on the Elamite border, but its site has not yet been found. Doubtless this was the Kazalla which is reported to have rebelled against Sargon of Agade under its king Kashtubila, and to have been reduced to ruins by the conqueror. At the time when Larsa and Babylon contended for the rule of Babylonia they found in Kazallu and its leader, a certain Iakhzir-el, far more danger than the now completely decayed power of Isin could threaten to either. Although Sumu-abum, the first king of Babylon, was already at odds with Kazallu, as his Larsa rival has also been, the stress of the fighting remained for Sumu-la-el, his successor. The eighteenth year of his reign was called the "year when Iakhzir-el went forth from Kazallu," which may mean either that he was driven out, or that he marched out upon a foray. Two years after the statement is more definite—"year when the wall of Kazallu was destroyed and its host smitten with arms." But the suggestion of decisive victory is false, since only five years after "Iakhzir-el was smitten with arms." Obviously the power of Kazallu was by no means broken, and in fact its walls had once more to be overthrown in the next reign. The circumstances of this defeat,

which seems to have been final, will re-focus attention upon the more immediate affairs and fortunes of Ur.

The reigns of Nur-Adad and Sin-idinnam were hardly distinguished by any high achievement, and were followed by three shorter reigns of which the last was purely ephemeral. It has already been mentioned that Nur-Adad was able to deal with a local sedition; he is also known to have continued the building of E-nun-makh at Ur, and to have carried through a fairly complete restoration of the *ziggurrat* in the neighbour city of Eridu. His son Sin-idinnam was more active. At home he built the great Sun-temple at Larsa, and in Ur continued to work upon E-nun-makh, and left also a new building of his own on the outskirts of the city, which served as a sacred repository. The remains of this structure, recently discovered, have some architectural peculiarities which suggest that it was covered by a barrel vault in three compartments. He speaks, with the conscious pride of all rulers of Ur who busied themselves in improving its water supply and communications, of his dredging out the Tigris "with the labour of his land," and thus securing "to his city and to his land constant water, unending abundance"; this task was undertaken after "he had stablished the foundation of the throne of Larsa, and had victoriously smitten with arms all his enemies." Another allusion to his military concerns informs us that he "mightily built a great fortress, Dur-gurgurri," so that his land might

dwell in peace. Similarly he built the "great wall of Mashkan-shabrim." Against whom these barriers were raised it is hard to say, for there is nothing to show that Sin-idinnam had any collisions with Babylon. Yet his claim to have conquered all his foes cannot be a completely vain flourish, and the course of events does, in fact, suggest a different opponent. A date-formula, probably of Sin-idinnam's reign, claims the defeat of "Elam, and Zambia king of Isin," but the next two kings of Larsa had only short and ineffective reigns, Zabum of Babylon ventured little abroad, and the contemporary kings of Isin were even thinner shadows than their predecessors. The general oppression which overlaid the land very probably came from the east, from that city of Kazallu which had long been a serious threat both to Larsa and to Babylon. At Larsa, indeed, a serious disaster occurred soon after this. The king Silli-Adad was violently deposed after only a few months of rule by an enemy whose troops made havoc of E-barra, the great temple-nucleus of the city. These events are dimly descried in the inscriptions of a powerful stranger who now presents himself with sudden mastery, Kudur-Mabug, the son of Simti-shilhak, plainly discovered by these names as an Elamite. His title is oddly novel, for he invariably calls himself *adda* ("father") of Amurru, or of Emutbal. By the latter is meant a district on the fringes of the eastern hills in about the latitude of Kut-al-Amarah, a place of origin which agrees perfectly

with his name. What he intended by Amurru is more difficult to decide, but, if the term be allowed its ordinary acceptation, he claimed thereby to be master of all the West, *i.e.* the higher course of the Euphrates and the whole of Syria. Indeed, whatever kernel of truth there is in the celebrated narrative of Genesis xiv. reveals the Dead Sea itself as within the dominions of "Chedorlaomer," whose original, if historic at all, is at least possibly Kudur-Mabug. However that may be, it was Kudur-Mabug who restored the fortunes of Larsa. Although presumably of like race with the rulers of Kazallu, he was certainly at feud with them, and seems to have been hard upon their heels when they burst into Larsa, for "he took vengeance for E-barra, he smote the head of the host of Kazallu and Muti-abal in Larsa and in Emutbal. By the command of Nannar and Shamash he captured Kazallu, overthrew its walls, and reduced it to terror." At another time, shortly after this success, he "brought the cities of Mashkan-Shabrim and Kar-Shamash back to Larsa." [29] From whose hand these were wrested is far from clear, but, since the Babylonian king had fortified Kar-Shamash a few years before, it may be that he was now the loser, although a later date of the same king records the destruction of the walls of Kazallu, which suggests that Babylon was then in alliance with Kudur-Mabug. The matter is obscure, but fortunately has little importance for our present purpose.

Although an alien invader Kudur-Mabug was

far from imitating the example of former Elamite raiders, who had been content to retire with their plunder and leave the Babylonian cities in ashes and ruins. So peaceful was his entry that the same tradesman sent in a bill[56] for beer supplied both to Ṣilli-Adad and Kudur-Mabug. Choosing rather to regard himself as the defender of Larsa, he restored the dynasty of that city not by assuming the crown himself, but by bestowing it upon his two sons successively, while he himself retained his titles of rule over Emutbal and Amurru. Nevertheless, it was upon their father's power that the new kings relied, and, until his death some time during the younger brother's reign, he is associated in all of their inscriptions. At his death he left Larsa and its dominions in a state of strength and prosperity beyond anything that it had hitherto known, and his younger son was thus prepared for the final struggle with his rivals for the supremacy of the whole land. The titularies of Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin (such were the sons' names) define accurately the extent of Larsa's dominion in their reigns. The style of "king of Sumer and Akkad" which they claimed was perhaps contestable, and signified no more than a sufficient estimate of their own consequence. But, besides Larsa, with which their actual kingship was identified, they counted Ur, Eridu, and Lagash as their chief possessions, and Rim-Sin adds, with somewhat greater reserve, the claim to Erech and Nippur. Neither Isin nor Babylon appears in this list, and, in fact, these cities were

undisturbed by the revolution at Larsa. After, as before, the intervention of Kudur-Mabug the land was still divided between the powerful dynasties of Larsa and Babylon and the faint pretenders at Isin, whose authority can scarcely have extended beyond their city gates.

At Ur the rule of these Elamite brothers lasted for more than seventy years amid ever-increasing prosperity, and towards the end of this period the city had re-entered into the magnificence which seemed to have been shattered for ever at the disastrous close of the Third Dynasty, two centuries before. Hitherto the progress of recovery from that calamity had been small and tardy, but Warad-Sin began, and his brother continued, an energetic campaign of rebuilding and enriching the second capital, for this was now the status of Ur. Hardly one of the principal buildings recently explored has not been completely restored by these kings, and their copious inscriptions, all concerned with building, testify to other works still unidentified. Besides the repair of very numerous temples, more or less important, Warad-Sin provided the city with a central stronghold by raising the walls of E-temen-ni-gur, the terrace upon which the ziggurrat stood, and adding a strong tower near its northern corner. A long inscription written upon clay-cones buried under its walls proves the authorship, and elsewhere Warad-Sin relates that the Moon-god had granted his humble petition that he might magnify his name by enlarging Ur, to which end he built a wall " like a

high mountain that cannot be undermined," to which he gave the name "Nannar establishes the foundation of the land"; whether this refers to the city wall, or to the fortification of the ziggurrat terrace has not yet been determined. Thus made safe from attack, the city was now ready for a general reconstruction of its principal buildings. It would hardly be of sufficient interest to observe here all the traces that still remain of these kings' activities, for they are seldom enough to convey any notion of how the completed works appeared, but some twenty inscriptions [31] attest the repair of dwellings for various gods. It does not follow, of course, that all of these were great and separate structures, indeed, it is very likely that many were simple chapels occupying but one or two of the innumerable rooms which were included in the vast complex of the Moon-god's temple, for the whole pantheon was at home in every city, having as it were lodgings in the house which belonged, as a whole, to the chief local god. Rim-Sin caused to be set up in the courtyard of the temple called Gipar-ku a finely inscribed calcite stele, which was afterwards smashed to small pieces, but some of the larger fragments show that it must have contained something like a summary of predecessors who had successively built the temple in their own days, and an account of the king's other labours. Thus the record has perished almost as completely as the monuments which it boasted, but the other inscriptions were written upon clay cones which were buried in the foundations of their

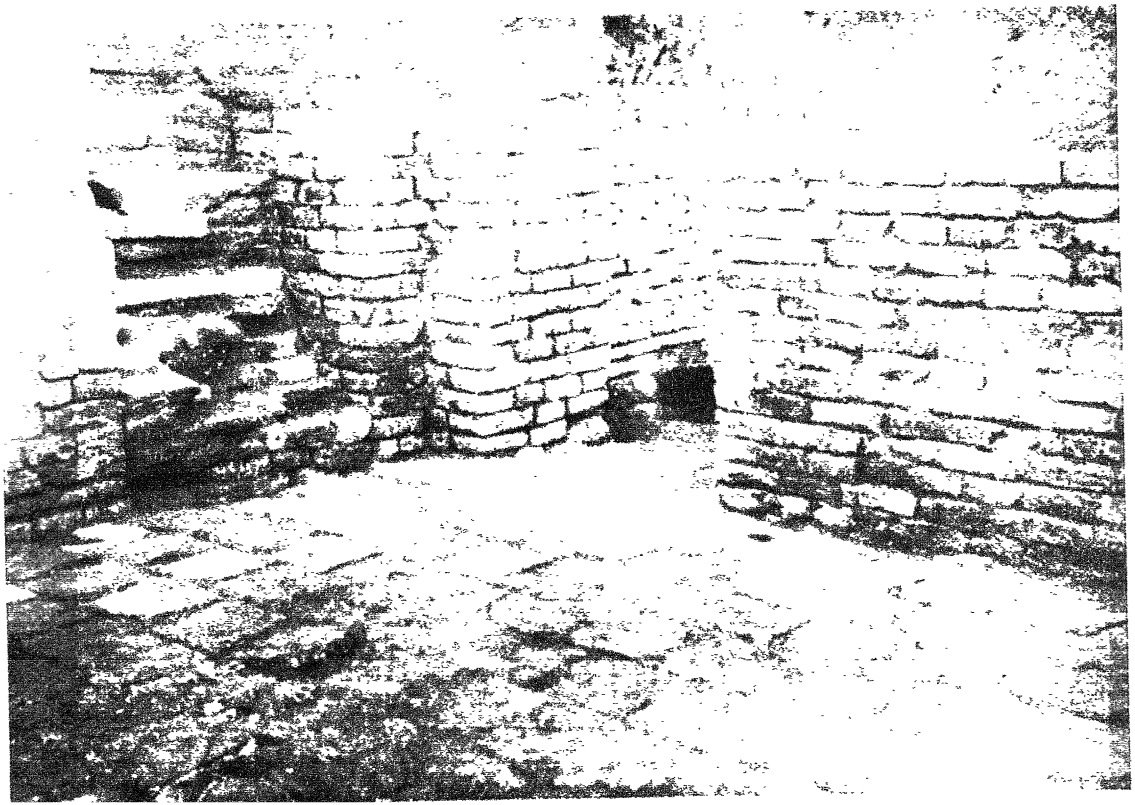
respective buildings, and thus escaped annihilation, though even of these several were found thrown down a well by later restorers concerned only to clear the ground for their new constructions.

Fortunately, there are other extant proofs of the prosperity which Ur enjoyed under the sons of Kudur-Mabug. The records of commerce, so voluminous in the flourishing days of the Third Dynasty, had dwindled to the thinnest of trickles through the Isin domination. With Gungunum and the beginning of the Larsa rule rather more activity can be discerned, but the "contracts" remain woefully scanty, and even decrease somewhat again as the grasp of his successors became enfeebled. Kudur-Mabug's vigorous restoration could not at once restore confidence, and the reign of Warad-Sin is still but sparsely represented in comparison with his brother's, whose later years especially are quoted upon a profusion of documents such as almost recalls the enormous output of the Third Dynasty. It is, in fact, the reign of Rim-Sin, together with those of the roughly contemporary kings of Babylon, which has furnished the majority of those deeds and business letters commonly called "old Babylonian" in order to distinguish them from the "new Babylonian," which do not set in until the land's deliverance from Assyrian vassalage by Nabopolassar in the seventh century. Besides the ordinary transactions with which the "old Babylonian" tablets have long made us familiar, which reveal the people living subject to a highly developed and

civilized legal system resting, doubtless, upon a code as comprehensive as the known laws of Hammurabi, a rescript of Rim-Sin lately found at Ur contains a curt order to a steward to allot a parcel of land to the bearer of the tablet, and thus proves that Rim-Sin also provided for the maintenance of his soldiers and other servants in the same feudal manner as Hammurabi used, who had great numbers of men settled upon the crown lands on conditions of personal service.[32] Many such orders written in his name direct the allotment of ground to men thus taken into his army or household.

To compensate for the ruined condition of the temples restored at this time in Ur there are the much better-preserved remains of private houses to serve not only as an aid to imagining the general appearance of the city, but also as another gauge of the prevailing prosperity. At least one flourishing residential quarter has been found, occupying a mound which lay just outside and south-west of the great wall which Nebuchadrezzar built later to surround the temple area. Though the site continued to be used for private dwellings until nearly the end of habitation in Ur, the buildings of later periods have mostly disappeared in the stress of decay and weather, so that it is only the older and deeper-lying buildings which remain, and these are found to belong to subjects of the Larsa kings. Indeed, very little is known of the Sumerian house before this time, although Dr. Hall found some with coloured plaster decoration

in the neighbouring city of Eridu [33] which were doubtless earlier. The site at Ur was repeatedly built over again at higher levels, but the Larsa houses, or the lower parts of them, were discovered in good preservation, so that their arrangement, plan, and character could be clearly made out. They stood in rows along both sides of narrow, mud-paved streets, running roughly at right angles to each other, though the lines were often broken, and the street sometimes obstructed, by oddly placed houses. To the street nothing was presented but the front entrances and, for the rest, blank walls, since the light was obtained from an open inside courtyard, and there was no need of windows to let in the noise and dust of passers. The walls, still standing to a height of seven or eight feet in several cases, were of materials suited to the means of the occupants, the best being of good baked brickwork with a rubble core, the poorer of crude brick with only a foundation of more durable baked brick. The essential feature of the plan was a central courtyard, reached from the front entrance through a sort of lodge. Generally, on the side opposite the entrance was the principal room, long and shallow, no doubt used for sitting and receptions, but the kitchen, marked by some of its essential fittings, was an equally necessary apartment, and the courtyard was surrounded by rooms on every side. In certain houses a private chapel seemed to have occupied one of these, and here the dead of the family were sometimes found buried under the



floor. Most striking of all the discoveries was that the doorways might be topped by true arches of brick, for one of these was found where it had collapsed on the ground, the bricks and their radial joints of mortar still keeping the original form. Though known to have been used in the next rebuilding of Ur several centuries later, and though the stone-built tombs of the earliest period prove that the idea had long been familiar, it is very remarkable to learn that the true constructional arch was already in use, even for modest private buildings, at the very beginning of the second millennium.

One other feature of the houses remains to be noticed; many still preserved the lowest steps of a staircase leading up from the courtyard level, and there is other evidence which makes it fairly certain that these stairs did not merely lead up on to a flat roof, but to an upper storey, the rooms of which corresponded with those on the ground-floor, and were approached by a wooden gallery supported on wooden uprights standing in the courtyard. To this height the external walls of the house were carried up in some lighter material, probably no more in some cases than post and matting work, with latticed windows. Thus planned and constructed (pl. 23) the houses of the Larsa period must have looked very little different from the town houses which may be seen to this day in Baghdad; such astonishing continuity of design is the best tribute to the perfection which Sumerian builders had so early attained in

devising a dwelling suited both to the climate and to the habits of the population. The least pleasing of these was the custom, which perhaps arose about this time, of burying the dead immediately under the floors. Usually the chapel, which had a step and an altar of brick, as well as certain niches in the wall, was chosen to receive under its pavement the brick-built corbelled tomb (pl. 24) or the bath-shaped clay coffin which covered the body, and in one place occurred jars or bowls which had held the remains of more than thirty children, buried in packed disarray round about the altar. Of the burial-rites and of the domestic gods who beheld them very little is known, but it is certain that these *lares et penates* were indispensable to the family, for, when the succession passed out of the direct male line, they were settled upon an adoptive son, so that he might continue the family rites unbroken.

In these seventy years of the Elamite domination from Larsa the fortunes of Ur undoubtedly rose high; it was destined to be the city's last full blooming, but none could then have conceived it. The temples were new and well-tended and wealthy, the more substantial citizens were well housed, the water supply had been restored, agriculture and trade were prosperous, peace at home was enriched by conquest abroad, yet the wars were not exhausting until the last vestiges of the old Isin dynasty were swept away and Rim-Sin at length came face to face with Hammurabi. It is of interest to inquire what degree or



BRICK-BUILT BURIAL VAULT UNDER THE FLOOR OF A HOUSE, CONTAINING A COFFIN MADE OF RIVETED COPPER PLATES

kind of culture was produced by this long interlude of settled peace; unhappily there is little upon which to found an answer. So great a disaster was soon again to overtake Ur that scarce anything was left which was not by its very nature immune from human fury. The Larsa period, then, is most unworthily represented by works of art, and any estimate of its achievements must allow due weight to the adverse circumstances of its end. But when full allowance has been made, it may still be admitted that the few surviving works do not give a high sense of the artistic powers of this age. The date-formulae are full of references to statuary in stone and metal, of which no trace remains. It can only be gathered that sculpture and casting were actively pursued. The much-broken stone statuette dedicated to Ningal by the priest Enannatum belongs to the beginning of the Larsa dynasty and the curious diorite figure of Bau or Gula sitting upon the geese (pl. 22) may probably, though not certainly, be ascribed to a somewhat later date. Neither is particularly good, and the second, despite its interest, is distinctly poor and clumsy work. Of metal there is nothing left to speak about, except two or three conventional peg-shaped copper figures (pl. 25) used in foundation deposits. No jewellery or precious metal has yet been obtained from this period, and the pottery also is plain, not specially well-made, and uninteresting, though a fine blue glaze was used for a few superior pieces. Architecture, while no doubt wholly

conventional, produced at least some excellent buildings, and employed the true arch, though it had been invented long before this period.

One art, however, flourished exceedingly, and that the most characteristic of all the Babylonian wisdom. Literary activity was more stirring and fruitful in this age than ever before or after, for this was, in fact, the origin to which can be traced back most of the important compositions which continued to be re-copied until the extinction of the old cuneiform script. Mention has already been made of the great mass of legal and commercial "papers" which distinguishes the reigns of the Larsan and Babylonian kings, but of such documents the Third Dynasty of Ur had already shown an even vaster profusion. But with these now begin to appear literary and religious works as well, and a considerable school-book apparatus. The religious texts are mostly hymns addressed either to gods or to deified kings, whether of the Third Dynasty, or of Isin or Larsa; they are nearly always written in Sumerian, without the Akkadian translations which later scribes added between the lines, though the Akkadian language appears independently in a few compositions. Myths and legends also are found, again mostly in Sumerian, though Akkadian is not unusual. The science of divination begins to acquire its books, and is already fully developed in its main directions of soothsaying from happenings in heaven or earth, from the entrails of victims and from the symptoms of sick men. Medicine, geometry, arithmetic, and

grammar have their treatises, and school-boys their copy-tablets. In certain of the private houses already mentioned scribes lived or scribal schools were held, the pupils being set to copy inscriptions of former kings which could still be seen preserved in the temples, often in a mutilated form. As these have since disappeared entirely, the learners' copies are now invaluable, though they were not always very faithful, and displayed a pleasingly human liability to mistakes. The enthusiasm, at least, of this generation for literature was unbounded, and our debt to it is infinite. What was the reason for this sudden outburst is not, of course, to be confidently explained, nor is it necessary here to seek an explanation even if one suggests itself. But at least it is advisable to consider, lest the achievement of this age should be over-valued, that the literary activity was probably less that of original authors than of scribes and scholars, writing down and making available a literature already in existence.

No account of this passage in the history of Ur could be complete for modern readers without some reference to the one circumstance which has ever preserved the name of Ur and made it familiar to all, namely, the story in the Book of Genesis concerning the early years of Abraham, when he dwelt with his father Terah and his two brothers in " Ur of the Chaldees.' The curiosity of later ages was kindled by the almost casual allusions of the Old Testament to this fact in a degree which seems out of proportion to its real

interest, and where sound tradition was lacking imagination was liberally employed to supply further details. All that is actually related is that Terah was dwelling in "Ur of the Chaldees" when his three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran were born to him; the last of these died in Ur after begetting Lot. Afterwards Terah took Abram with his wife Sarai, and the young Lot, and removed to the city of Harran where they settled until the death of Terah. It is also expressly stated (Joshua xxiv. 2) that Terah "served other gods"; moreover, in the agreement between Jacob and Laban the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor are made joint arbiters, from which it appears that Nahor continued in his father's idolatry. It would hardly be expected that Babylonian tradition should have anything to add to these few facts, since Abraham was not, of course, a national hero to any but the Jews. Nevertheless it is certain that in Berossus, the native historian who wrote in Greek at the beginning of the third century before Christ, a reference to these events was detected by subsequent writers upon Jewish history. Josephus[34] has this: "Berossus makes mention of our father Abraham without naming him; he says, 'In the tenth generation after the Flood there was among the Chaldaeans a certain just man and great, and well seen in astronomy.'" Moreover, of the various fragments that survive from the works of Alexandrine Jews written in the third or second centuries before Christ at least one is of especial

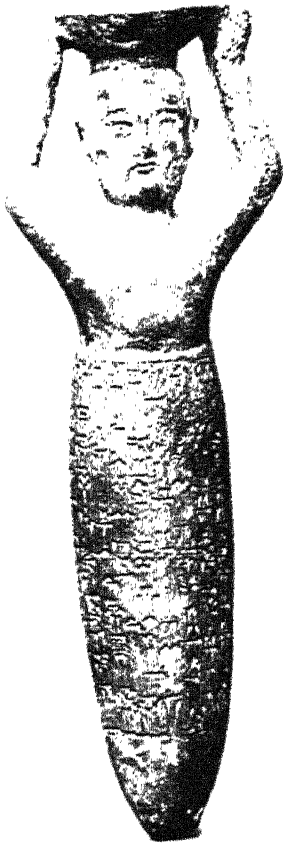
interest because it discovers some acquaintance with the actual place, not merely with the Old Testament history; Eupolemus is reported to have written that "in the tenth generation, in the city Kamarina, which some call the city Urié (that is, being interpreted, city of the Chaldaeans), there was born in the thirteenth generation Abraham, who surpassed all in birth and wisdom" *—here also he is reputed to have been expert in astrology and magic. It would be of great interest to know what Berossus went on to relate about this personage, and whether Josephus was justified in assuming that the allusion was to Abraham.† The work of Berossus, however, is lost, and the only hope of information upon this head is that some day there may be recovered the Babylonian source from which he drew this part of his narrative. It is a seeming paradox with which use has now made us familiar, that while the Greek compilation has disappeared for ever, the Babylonian original may yet survive. Such, in any case, is all that the native tradition has retained of Abraham's sojourn in his first home, for the elaborate inventions of the rabbis upon this theme have only the slenderest connexion with serious history. These may be glanced at later.

If it be asked what contemporary evidence can be found, there arises at once the difficulty of deciding what was contemporary. This place has

* See below, p. 254 f.

† The allusion was perhaps to the afflicted sage named Lal-ur-alimma, the hero of a religious-philosophical poem which has been compared with the Book of Job.

been chosen for the topic of Abraham merely because it is so generally assumed that the fourteenth chapter of Genesis reveals that he lived in the time of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, who dispossessed Rim-Sin of his kingdom over Larsa and Ur. But it must be confessed, however regretfully, that a long and exhaustive discussion has not succeeded in basing that chapter upon any known set of historical circumstances. "Chedorlaomer" (Kudur-Lagamar) is a perfectly possible Elamite name, but it has never yet been found; "Amraphel king of Shinar" is a very difficult equivalent for Hammurabi king of Babylon; "Arioch king of Ellasar" is by no means an impossible representative of the king usually called Warad-Sin of Larsa, for the signs with which his name is written could be read Eri-Aku; but, unfortunately for the equation, Warad-Sin was dead thirty years before Hammurabi came to the throne. "Tidal king of nations" would be very fairly represented by some Tudkhalia king of the Hittites, but once more, although the name is authentic, no such king is attested at the required period. Those names were once thought to have been found again together on three late Babylonian tablets which, when complete, evidently told of a time when war and anarchy under foreign conquerors devastated the land, but their obscure style and fragmentary condition baffle any expectation of help from that quarter. So far, therefore, as Babylonian history is concerned it has no explanation of the story told in Genesis, and since



the latter involves actors who are obviously princes of Babylonia, or of the lands directly connected with it, the facts referred to must, if they are genuine at all, belong to a time of which nothing is known from other sources. Nor is this in any way impossible, for there are still very conspicuous gaps in the history of Babylon. Indeed, the six centuries of Kassite rule, to select a notable example, are almost bare of ascertained content, and to place the battle of four kings with five somewhere in these dark ages would be as legitimate a conjecture as any other.

If, then, the chapter of Genesis must be passed over as altogether too insecurely linked with Babylonian history, there is only one circumstance which may give colour to the belief that Abraham did, in fact, dwell at Ur under some part of the reigns of Rim-Sin or of Hammurabi. It is then that appear the first mentions of a people or class of persons called Habiru, whose name is also written with an ideogram signifying "cut-throats." They are found as companies of pressed and servile soldiers under the command of subordinate officers, and doubtless subject to strict discipline, not the free-booting bands which are the villains of the Amarnah letters, written in panic to the Egyptian court of the early fourteenth century by Syrian local governors whom these brigands terrified. Though, indeed, still contested by some scholars, the identification of Habiru with Hebrew is so distinctly called for both by the likeness of the words, and by the part which the Habiru play in

Western Asia at this time, that it may be accepted with little uneasiness for the present purpose, which is only to show that a people among whom "Abram the Hebrew" (Genesis xiv. 13) was a chieftain first became known to the subjects of Rim-Sin and Hammurabi. In later times they are very little more heard of in Southern Babylonia, but appear as a formidable though unorganized power in Syria during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, the inveterate enemies of the Egyptian subject-cities, and sometimes the tools of Hittite policy. Lately, too, they have been discovered existing as a slave population among the non-Semitic inhabitants of Kirkuk, east of the Tigris, in whose legal and commercial documents, dating from the late fifteenth century, Habiru are commonly mentioned. It is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that all the tribes which shared this general appellation moved northwards and westwards together at some time after the end of the First Dynasty of Babylon, but the biblical tradition of Abraham's migration from Ur to Harran at least corresponds in a general, and even a rather striking, way with this change in the location of the "Hebrews" as traced by references in cuneiform tablets. The result of all these considerations is to suggest (1) that the tradition of Abraham's birth at Ur may be fearlessly accepted; (2) that his sojourn there may have been under the reign of Rim-Sin or of Hammurabi, probably the former, and thus about 2000–1900 B.C., though this cannot be sustained by Genesis xiv., as usually

supposed; and (3) that his traditional journeying from Ur to Harran does, in fact, broadly correspond with a general northward transfer of the Habiru or Hebrew peoples from southern Babylonia where they are first mentioned in secular literature.[35] Finally it may be worth observing that nothing in any way referable to Abraham has been found in the recent excavations; nothing of the kind was to be expected.

Meagre as these facts and possibilities are, they are more than could be known to the Jewish doctors and students who compiled the great series of treatises on the traditionary law of Israel which are collectively called the Talmud. Writing in the first centuries of the Christian era, these learned men could have had no direct knowledge concerning the forefather of their race, but they used a great deal of imagination, or rather, a great deal of current legend, to supplement what was related upon this subject by the Old Testament. Thus it is possible to read in various places of the Talmud [36] detailed accounts of the birth and the early days of Abraham, the manner in which he came to abjure idolatry, and the results to himself of this revolt against the customs of his country. All of these stories centre upon the idolatry of his father Terah, who is usually represented not only as a worshipper, but as a manufacturer and vendor of idols. It is said that, on the night when Abraham was born, his father was entertaining certain counsellors and astrologers of the king Nimrod. As these were leaving his door they observed one

star which swallowed up four others in each of the quarters of heaven. Hence the astrologers inferred that a child had that night been born who should rule over all the world, and they resolved to counsel Nimrod that he should seek out the child, pay to its parents any recompense they asked, and immediately slay it. Terah ridiculed this proposal, saying that it was like offering a mule a whole houseful of barley if it would first allow you to cut off its head. Hereupon the counsellors guessed his secret, and it was only by hiding the child and declaring that it was dead that Terah could save his son. When the boy grew up he became curious to know which was the supreme god among the many idols in his father's house, and, when the largest was pointed out to him, he wished to offer a sacrifice to it. But, as the idol made no motion to consume a cake of the very finest flour which had been baked for him, Abraham was persuaded that these gods were false and, in his father's absence, he set fire to the idols. On his return Terah angrily inquired who had burned his images, and was told by Abraham that it was the largest of them which had burned the others. Terah hastily replied that this was impossible, the inanimate figure could not have done such a thing. Thus he discovered his own folly in worshipping these false gods, for which he was rebuked by his son. It was also said that Terah kept a shop in which idols were sold, and that one day Abraham, to whom the vanity of idolatry had already been revealed, was left in charge of it. There came in

an old man of seventy to buy an idol, but, when his choice was made, Abraham refused the price he offered, and upbraided the old man instead for his superstition in desiring at his advanced age to reverence a thing which had been made only a few days ago. This incident led Abraham's brothers to conclude that he was unsuited to business, and he was therefore ordered to act as priest only to the idols. But he was no more satisfactory in this position, for, when a woman came with an offering, instead of accepting it on behalf of his gods, Abraham openly blasphemed, and uttered a curse against them. For this scandalous conduct he was accused before Nimrod, who commanded him to worship various natural things and heavenly bodies, but Abraham easily proved in each case that there was something in nature still more powerful and therefore more proper to worship. Finally Nimrod, out of patience, said, "Then worship me," and when Abraham refused he prepared a great pyre on which to burn him alive, but God intervened and rescued him from the fire. It was, indeed, from this incident that the rabbis professed to derive the name of the city, identifying the old Sumerian word with the Hebrew *'ûr*, "flame," and understanding the call of Abraham as his deliverance from the "fire of the Chaldees." These and such like stories concerning Abraham's early life had so great a vogue among the Jews that they were taken up in various works of early Christian and other writers. Interesting specimens may be found, for

example, in the Syriac treatise called the "Cave of Treasures"; [37] even Muhammad knew of them, and has related the persecution of Abraham and his rescue from the fire in the twenty-first chapter of the Quran:

> "They said, 'Burn him, and come to the succour of your gods, if ye will do *anything at all*.'
>
> "We said, 'O fire, be thou cold, and to Abraham a safety!'
>
> "And they sought to lay a plot against him, but we made them the sufferers." *

So much, then, for what is known, what may be supposed, and what has been said, of the figure which had, by an incidental association, kept alive the name of Ur through so many centuries of oblivion.

The last incidents in this chapter of the city's fortunes were crowded, dramatic, and violent. Since passing out of the sovereignty of Isin it had first slumbered, then flourished, for about a century and a half under the kings of Larsa, and some description has already been given of its condition as one of the capitals of Rim-Sin. The long reign of this king was devoted to ending in his own favour the tripartite balance of power which had so long existed between Larsa, Isin, and Babylon. The issue of Rim-Sin's plan was far other than he had hoped. It seems, with our imperfect information, as if he had miscalculated

* Rodwell's translation.

his object, for he devoted full thirty years to the patient increase of pressure upon his neighbour at Isin, having only an occasional brush with Babylon, in reality a far more dangerous adversary. This hostile activity led, indeed, to some fitful co-operation between Isin and Babylon, but nothing likely to be effective against the steady purpose of Rim-Sin, and Babylon, more remote and not immediately threatened, was too supine, or perhaps too politic, to throw in its full weight. In the thirty-first year of his reign Rim-Sin achieved his long-prepared triumph; "by the exalted weapon of Anu, Enlil, and Ea, the true shepherd Rim-Sin captured Isin, the royal city, with all its inhabitants as many as there were; over its multitudes he spread life, the name of its kingship he caused to leave it for ever." Ur might now feel herself once more an imperial city in the ancient manner, for Rim-Sin could see nothing more to strive for, and counted all his subsequent years simply by their number after the "crowning mercy" of Isin; nothing else seemed worth recording in comparison with that achievement. But if the glamour really lasted more than a few years it inspired but a false security, for with the destruction of Isin less than half of the battle was won. Five years later the throne of Babylon was occupied by Hammurabi (pl. 26), and a change must soon have been felt by the southern capitals. The new king was all strength and industry; from his later imperial methods may be inferred the patience, the despatch, and the sagacity with which he set out

his purpose, and reorganized his petty kingdom for the attainment of it. He discovered no haste and was content to have more than half his reign, thirty years, pass by before his final blow, but then it was decisive, and by an ironic coincidence his thirty-first year brought as complete a victory over Larsa as the thirty-first of Rim-Sin had formerly gained over Isin. Less than forty years had thus decided the long-pending issue between the three cities and finally left the upstart Babylon in possession of the sovereignty which, in name at least, she was never again to lose until the coming of the Persians.

The results of Hammurabi's victory were probably not very disturbing to Ur and Larsa. There is no evidence of destruction by the Babylonian forces, and Ur was one of the cities to which "everlasting waters of abundance" were secured by the digging of a great canal called "Hammurabi is the abundance of the people." Moreover, in the administrative correspondence of the new ruler, some of which survives, there is ample proof that the life of these cities continued uninterrupted. The reason for this may be that the final struggle with Rim-Sin took place in the eastern district of Yamutbal, across the Tigris, and that the cities offered no resistance to the conqueror. From Larsa have been recovered two series of despatches from the king to his local officers, and to these is owed much of our information upon Hammurabi's government, and upon the internal state of the country under his rule. One



HAMMURABI, KING OF BABYLON, ABOUT B.C. 1920

set is devoted entirely to orders for the provision of fiefs for the king's soldiers and other henchmen, and tablets have now been found at Ur containing similar orders from Rim-Sin. Moreover, in both places the writing of private deeds and all kinds of commercial documents goes on unchecked into the reign of Hammurabi's son. Apart from these sufficient witnesses to the peaceful process of changing rulers Ur has not as yet yielded many indications of the new era as a subject of Babylon. There are a few seals of courtiers and priests, adherents of the new ruler; there is also a disappointing fragment of what might have been an official inscription of the greatest interest, sculptured upon a polygonal stele of black diorite, in the Sumerian and Babylonian languages. Unhappily, the only intelligible lines refer to Hammurabi's conquests, and it is quite uncertain for what purpose this monument was set up at Ur. But it was evidently regarded as symbolic of the Babylonian rule, since its destruction was deliberate and meticulous. Few, indeed, were the years that it was to stand upon its base in the courtyard of Nin-gal's temple.

Samsu-iluna was destined to play the historic part of the unhappy successor to a great father. Perhaps he was especially unfortunate, perhaps he only seemed so because incompetent. In any case his kingdom began to pay retribution for the victories of Hammurabi over the wild tribes in the hills to the north-east of Babylonia. These, gathering strength after the conqueror's death,

began to raid the plains under the leadership of the Kassites, a people whose territory, of ill-defined extent, lay to the south-east of the modern Hulwan, near neighbours of those Gutians who had formally overthrown the great dynasty of Agade, an example which the Kassites were soon to imitate. In Samu-iluna's ninth year is recorded a defeat of their incursion, but this only diffused the flame, for the next year brought open revolt in the Elamite border districts and in the old cities of Erech and Isin, an area roughly corresponding with Rim-Sin's former kingdom. This revolt indeed was headed by a certain Rim-Sin, but it is hardly possible that he could have been the old king himself, who had already reigned sixty years before his defeat by Hammurabi, more than twenty years before this. Samsu-iluna was able to crush all these rebellions, east and south ; a later record says that he captured, or burnt alive, Rim-Sin in his palace at Larsa. It is fairly clear indeed that nearly all the ancient cities of the south were involved in this outbreak, which was, in fact, brought about by the formation of a new power in their rear. About the time of Hammurabi's triumph over the Larsa kingdom, numbers of those who, for whatever cause, had been unwilling to accept the new master had taken refuge in the marsh-country, almost impenetrable even to this day, which occupies the extreme south about the head of the Persian Gulf. Safe in this unprofitable and almost amphibious retreat the malcontents had found a leader in one Iluma-ilum, who, despite

some reverses and the invasion of his reedy islands, was able not only to maintain himself but gradually to deprive the Babylonian king of all his southern provinces up to Nippur itself. Though Ur is not mentioned expressly in the obscure references we have to this revolt, it need not be doubted that the tenth year of Samsu-iluna was the date of its passing out of Babylonian control, an event of which the fanatical smashing of Hammurabi's monument stands as a symbol. Such an act may have been committed by Iluma-ilum's occupying forces or by the rebel inhabitants themselves; it was a gesture of defiance. The answer came soon, for Samsu-iluna, if no peer of his father, was yet no weakling. He marched south in the next year, and chased Iluma-ilum to the very sea, where a battle was fought. The issue was in doubt, but the Babylonians retired satisfied that they had chastised the insurgent, who, in turn, could congratulate himself that his power was unbroken.

It is in connexion with this campaign that Ur appears in history for the last time before another period of darkness and stagnation. Samsu-iluna's eleventh year is named that in which he destroyed the walls of Ur and Erech, no doubt capturing or procuring the surrender of these cities on his march against Iluma-ilum. Such a measure seems to indicate despair of holding these places permanently, and a purpose not to leave them as strongholds for his enemy, but it is singular that a king advancing to reclaim what

had so lately been his own domain should have thus anticipated the certainty of its eventual loss. Plainly, he had more than one frontier to defend, and in his later years his forces were drawn in to still narrower lines. Henceforth although the dynasty of Babylon endured through four more reigns, it perhaps ruled over little more than the territory which the first founders of the line had won for themselves, although Larsa, at least, continued to obey the rescripts of Abeshu, second successor of Hammurabi. After him there too is silence, such as had lain over Ur since Samsu-iluna's demolition of its walls. The contracts cease, building is no more heard of, the country is wasted by Kassite marauders, the city decays in the torpid control of the marshmen, too timid away from their lagoons to go abroad in quest of the trade which alone could bring back life to their cities. When Hammurabi's monument toppled in the temple court the fortunes of Ur went down with it, to lie in the dust for centuries.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE KASSITES AND THE ASSYRIAN CONQUEST

IT is at once the fascination and the danger of ancient history, as revealed by the great discoveries of last century, that it has opened so long a retrospect. The fascination is evident, the danger is that estimates of distance are likely to become wild at extreme ranges, and that historians may be tempted to play with hundreds, almost with thousands of years, as though they were indeed but a watch in the night. Yet it helps to a sober conception of the really astonishing antiquity of that civilization of which Ur was one of the centres to consider that no less than five centuries elapsed—and that according to a well-ascertained chronology—between the abandonment of Ur by Samsu-iluna and the next appreciable event in its life, the partial restoration by a later king of Babylon named Kurigalzu. Neither in the city itself has anything been found to witness that life went on at all there in this enormous interval, nor from outside is there to be had any specific information concerning it. Nevertheless there can be no doubt of its continuance; the next to bestow care upon it found

the ancient buildings still in their place though sadly decayed, and a scanty priesthood still observing the rites of an impoverished Moon-god. Ur had still scenes of war and peace in which to play a part, though no more imperial destinies waited upon its future.

These five centuries (longer than the time between the Wars of the Roses in England and the great European War) were full of stirring events and fundamental changes in the whole of Western Asia as to which the records have much to tell. Even to summarize them would, of course, swell these pages far beyond the modesty of local history, and therefore only those movements can be considered which directly bore upon Ur in common with the other great cities of the south which had been the pride of ancient Sumer.

Kingship still resided in Babylon, but in other hands than those to which Hammurabi had bequeathed it. Something has already been said of the enmity which began to close round every side of his successor and of the drastic limitation which his empire so quickly suffered. The raids of eastern barbarians, the Kassites, began in the ninth year of Samsu-iluna and thenceforth became chronic, assisted as they were by revolts in other parts of the kingdom, particularly in the south. These invaders had little cohesion and were consequently unable for many years to gain effective control of the plains exposed to their plundering expeditions. By strict limitation of their frontiers the kings of Hammurabi's line were thus able to

maintain themselves in Babylon through four more reigns, until an attack from another quarter finally extinguished them; a sudden descent by the Hittites, from their distant capital in Asia Minor, captured and probably destroyed Babylon, which they did not attempt to hold. Hereupon the Kassites, under a chief named Gandash, occupied the vacant capital, and henceforth a long dynasty of Kassite kings were reckoned as rulers of the whole land. From about the middle of the eighteenth century these foreigners occupied the throne for no less than 570 years, and, after the disappearance of the last of the old Sea-land dynasty (two centuries after the accession of Gandash) they were the only recognized kings. Their long period of authority is as obscure as it was undistinguished. Even the order and manner of their succession is uncertain; there were doubtless years when two or more tribal chiefs were claiming to reign at the same time and none had the means to make his claim effective. Though it is unlikely that more than a minority of Kassite population actually settled in Babylonia the hillmen established themselves there as an aristocracy, and their predominance, coupled with the exhaustion due to war, invasion, and the surcease of trade, disastrously crippled the energy and debased the culture of their subjects. It is commonly enough observed that prowess in arms and distinction in the arts have coincided in flourishing ages, but in Babylonia the centuries of Kassite misrule reduced the level of civilization at home even below the

measure of imbecility abroad. Yet this feebleness of the government in Babylonia was not due merely to the native defects of the rulers, but was occasioned by the general state of Western Asia, in which at this time Babylon had completely lost the predominance to new powers. Some fifty years before the Kassite invasion Egypt had fallen under the oppression of those Asiatic conquerors called the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, whose movement southward had apparently been forced by the formation of the Hittite kingdom in eastern Asia Minor. These foreigners reigned in Egypt for more than a hundred and fifty years until, early in the sixteenth century, they were expelled by the Egyptians reunited under Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, whose successors, especially the mighty Thothmes III, reversed the course of conquest and carried their arms far into Asia to found there a wide Egyptian empire. From Asia Minor another great power, that of the Hittites, threatened northern Syria and Mesopotamia, which was at that time occupied by a third kingdom called Mitanni, owing at least some of its strength to an infusion of Indo-Europeans, who thus first become visible in actual history. As though these were not enough occupants for a stage which one alone had often filled there was yet another, destined finally to take precedence of all, the rising power of Assyria, with its capital at the city of Ashur on the middle course of the Tigris. Counting only the definitely constituted kingdoms, therefore, Babylon was but one of five,

and in point of importance certainly the fifth among them.

In addition, however, to the rivalry of these formidable neighbours, the Kassite dominion in its later centuries suffered from a domestic affliction which was even more weakening. When the Hyksos were expelled from Egypt and Palestine, about 1580, they returned perforce to the nomadic life of the Syrian desert from which they had come. This sudden accession to the numbers seeking subsistence in the leanest of countries set up a pressure which was forced to seek an outlet when life for all became impossible. Thus began the great Aramaean movement, which was at first directed towards Syria, but later spread south-eastward, and resulted in the final establishment of Aramaean tribes in southern Babylonia and in the lands east of the Tigris. It is true that this occupation did not become effectual until after the end of the long Kassite domination, but there can be no doubt of the difficulties caused by the presence of watchful enemies at the heart of the kingdom, always ready to leap down the short step into the rich valley from their deserts in which they were almost invulnerable. Something more will have to be said of these tribesmen when they had finally become the actual population of lower Babylonia, and of the contrast between their loose organization and the ancient cities, but for the moment they are simply one more among the agents which, by cutting the lines along which the trade and wealth of Babylon had flowed in her prosperous years,

reduced her to a penurious existence at home. And to this adversity of the capital Ur must add the age of utter neglect which had begun from the day when Samsu-iluna disarmed and evacuated the city which he could no longer hold.

Kurigalzu, the first to take pity upon the old buildings fretted by half a millennium of decay, left his name written upon many bricks and door-stones which modern exploration has restored to the light. None of these inscriptions refer to his parentage and therefore, since there were apparently two or three Kurigalzus in the long Kassite dynasty, it is not quite certain what date should be given to his restoration. In fact, however, there is some evidence that the king in question was the later of them, sometimes called the "young," being the son of his predecessor Kadashman-Harbe; in that case he reigned about the middle of the fourteenth century. There are two reasons for supposing that it was Kurigalzu "the young" who rebuilt the Moon-god's temple, first, that two kings belonging to the next dynasty (eleventh century) are known to have bestowed some care upon Ur, but their work was of very limited extent, so that it should seem the buildings of Kurigalzu were still in tolerable condition. More important than this indirect witness is an inscription [38] of Kurigalzu, son of Kadashman-Harbe, from an unknown site, which records the grant of a great estate and revenues to the temple of Ishtar at Erech. Not merely does this reveal the general policy of Kurigalzu in re-establishing

the cults of cities under his control, but in his preface to the grant he refers definitely to his patronage of Ur, by which there is consequently reason to suppose that he meant the rebuilding of the principal religious structures.

Kurigalzu's reign was short and troubled; it began with convulsion and ended in disaster. His father Kadashman-Harbe was the grandson of Ashur-uballit, king of Assyria, who by actual strength and apt diplomacy had raised his obscure country to the position of a power which the great kings of Egypt, the Hittites, and Mitanni, were obliged to respect. Kadashman-Harbe fought with success against the progress of the desert tribes, and planted a garrison in their midst to keep them in check. In his absence at these wars his subjects made insurrection against him, and set up an usurper in his room. This brought down the army of Assyria, which speedily mastered the revolt, and restored Kadashman-Harbe, or possibly his son Kurigalzu, to the throne. At this time, therefore, the southern kingdom was under direct Assyrian tutelage, and it was as the nominee of the Assyrian king that Kurigalzu reigned. The rest that is known about his reign chiefly concerns its end. He earned some distinction as a soldier by subduing the Sea-land (prone as usual to detach itself from the kingdom), and by defeating the army of Elam at the frontier fortress of Dur-Shulgi. Deluded by these successes he chafed at Assyrian control, and finally broke into open hostility against Enlil-nirari, the new "priest of

Ashur." Two battles were fought, the first indecisive, the second a complete disaster for the Babylonians, in which Kurigalzu himself was apparently killed.

Very considerable remains of his work at Ur still exist, for it is true to say that he was the last king who undertook the thorough renovation of nearly the whole of the temple-complex, though he does not seem to have touched the ziggurrat, at once the best-constructed and the least vulnerable of the sacred buildings. Kurigalzu's work lies fairly near the modern surface everywhere, and is therefore generally found in ruin down almost to pavement level. Partly for this reason there is nothing now left to represent any works of art with which he may have adorned his buildings, but the general style of such monuments as survive from that age is undistinguished, indeed poor, and the shapeless, clumsy engraving of his inscriptions upon the gate-sockets [39] does not suggest that his craftsmen at Ur in any way surpassed the mediocrity of their time. His reconstructions were, however, extensive, and embraced a number of the larger constituents of the temple as well as several smaller chapels. For the most part he was content piously to base his walls upon his predecessors' foundations, but there are two places in which his buildings are of more special interest. As at present explored, the largest member of all that lay within the temenos-wall is the great paved courtyard which fronts the north-east side of the ziggurrat and its three

stairways; this was laid by Kurigalzu, though here too it is fairly clear that he simply followed the old plan. Yet the very extent of the work and a few details which remain are such as to inspire respect for the king's achievement if not for his originality (though it must be remembered that originality was out of place in restoring a temple). This great open space was bounded all round by lines of chambers, long and narrow on all but the north-east side, and all communicating with the court, but not to the outside. Only on the north-east side was there an entry, flanked apparently by gate-towers, and this either led out of the sacred area or corresponded with a gate directly in front of it piercing the temenos-wall. At least in the sixth century Nebuchadrezzar made such a gate in the new temenos-wall which he built, and it is probable that in his days this double entry (through the wall and through the gatehouse of the court) led directly to the principal shrine of the Moon-god, between the stairways up the ziggurrat. What purpose this great paved expanse served in Kurigalzu's time it is impossible to say, for no evidence has been found,[58] but as an architectural feature it combined with the ziggurrat in such a way that, viewed from the entrance, the south-west wall of the court looked like the lowest stage of the tower that rose above and behind it. This south-west wall, broken by three entrances to rooms made in its thickness, was built with a facing of attached half-columns, each one metre wide, decorated with double-sunk

grooves down their fronts. The whole was finished with a thick coating of whitewash, evidently designed as a striking contrast with the massive lower stage of the ziggurrat which was of unrelieved black, so that the observer, passing under the gate-house into the courtyard, would see across its wide pavement four horizontal bands of colour, narrowing upwards in white, black, red, and blue; the effect of such a work, executed on so immense a scale, must have been imposing.

The other building, which shows Kurigalzu's hand at its best, is the still conspicuous ruin of E-dublal-makh, an ancient gateway giving access to the east corner of the great terrace upon which the ziggurrat stood. The structural history of this place is not very clear, but it seems that, from being a mere entrance, it had been formerly converted into an outer and inner hall wherein the judges held their sessions, and where, as the name implies, the court records were preserved. Finding this in ruins, Kurigalzu levelled the ground up to the stumps of the old walls, extended the mound outwards on three sides, and enclosed the whole with a retaining wall, thus forming a low terrace half the height of the ziggurrat terrace. Upon this he built the actual "court-house," with its two rooms on two levels, the higher and lower rooms and the courtyard floor being connected by steps. The ruin (pl. 27) is at present chiefly distinguished by one of the side doors to the outer room which has preserved complete its arched top, built of *voussoir* bricks; though it is

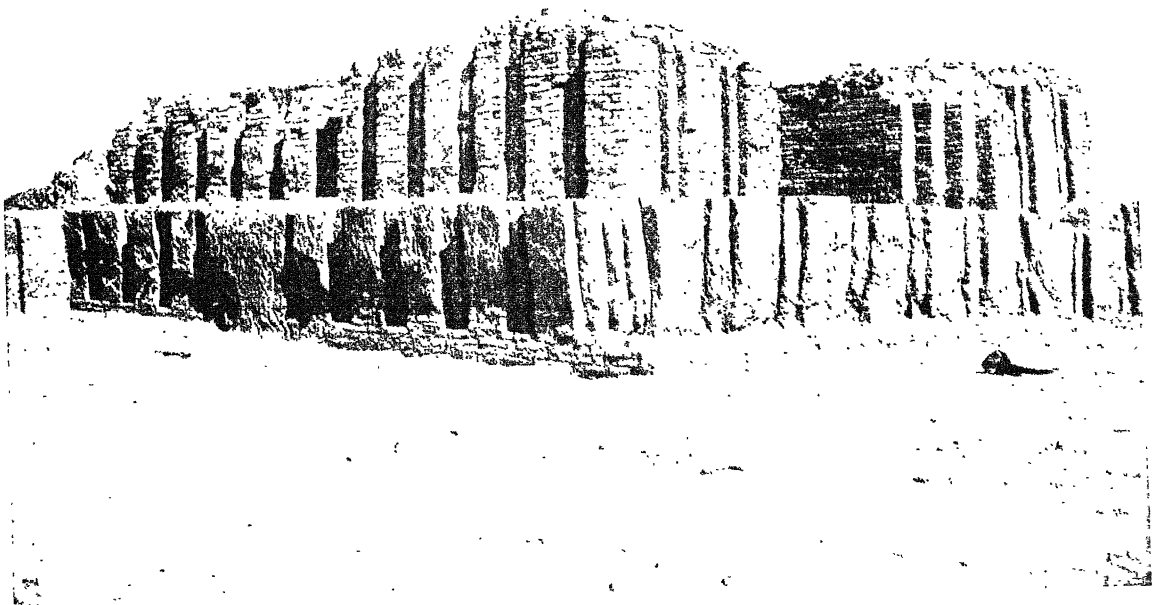


PLATE XXVII

RUINS OF DUB-LAL-MAKH, AS REBUILT BY KURIGALZU (see p. 200)
(After *Antiquaries' Journal*, V, pl. XLIII)

now known that the arch was no invention of Kurigalzu, yet the survival of one complete is rare enough to be notable in a Babylonian building. There is even the possibility that the inner room was roofed with a dome.

Newly housed in a splendid establishment the Moon-god now lacked only revenues suitable to his state. It is not likely that the munificence of Kurigalzu neglected to provide these, as it so amply provided for Ishtar of Erech. If the same analogy may be used, the endowment would have been a great estate, including towns, fields, watercourses, and dry land, yielding rich tithes of flour, wine, bread, cakes, dates of Dilmun, and oil, with a daily allowance of meats for the divine table. Herewith Nannar might peaceably dwell in the "place of his heart's delight," so long as the gift of his kingly benefactor was unimpaired. But Kurigalzu was not destined to a long reign, and his pious arrangements may have fared well or ill—nothing is known, for Ur sinks again into still other centuries of coma, giving to history no sign of the life that must still have pulsed sluggishly within. But if the service of Nannar was sustained by the income from great estates in the country it is highly probable that his new affluence was short lived. Kurigalzu had embroiled himself, to his own disaster, with Assyria; his son imitated his example and earned the same fate at the hands of the next Assyrian king, Adad-nirari I, a formidable soldier, who, though not inclined to absorb the kingdom which victory had placed at his

mercy, left it more powerless than ever. The interminable Kassite dynasty lingered still through several more reigns, and was able to survive even the sack of Babylon, and the temporary subjugation of the land, by Tukulti-Enurta I, the grandson of Adad-nirari, chiefly because the victor himself fell a victim to internal dissensions at home, which so utterly reduced Assyria to impotence that the king of Babylon was soon able once more to insult, this time with impunity, the power which had thrice triumphed over him within a century. In this comparatively happy condition, at least as against Assyria, the Kassite dynasty came at last to an end and was succeeded by a line of kings known to the chroniclers as the "Second Dynasty of Isin," in the course of which Ur is twice descried through momentary gaps in the curtain of oblivion.

Before noticing these, however, it is necessary to revert to a factor in the environment of Babylonia at this time which has already been noticed, but now demands nearer observation since it is henceforth essential in the history of Ur and all the other ancient cities of the south. Pressure and gradual infiltration from the Aramaean tribes of the desert had been experienced for many years past, but before the beginning of the eleventh century it had become a manifest threat to the whole Babylonian civilization whether in the home land or transplanted as it now was in Assyria. Both of these countries was able to produce a champion whose prowess delayed, if it could not

avert, the disaster; in Babylon it was Nebuchadrezzar I, who, however, dissipated his strength in wars against Elam and Assyria, which naturally led to Assyrian reprisals. It chanced, too, that, soon after the death of Nebuchadrezzar, the throne of Assyria was occupied by Tiglath-pileser I, a king of extraordinary warlike vigour, who carried his arms in repeated expeditions westward into Syria and Asia Minor, southward to Babylon itself and the desert tribes along the Euphrates, and eastward into the mountains. His empire, indeed, disappeared with himself, but he left to his successors at least the strength to cope with the Aramaean onset, now ready to make its final effort. The issue was not finally decided until the early ninth century, and in the contest Assyria was brought very low, but her natural vigour and military organization was just able to hold out until the strain relaxed. But this resistance, by its very success, only aggravated the attacks of the diverted tribes upon the south country, in which they had already some footing, and where centuries of disunion and misgovernment had enfeebled any defence that could be offered. Nor could the kings of Babylon, even at this crisis, refrain from suicidal attacks upon Assyria, the one power with which they should have cultivated friendship against the common danger. Sheer necessity at length forced the Babylonian king, named Marduk-shapik-zêr-mati, to go himself upon an embassy to Ashur seeking an alliance, but it was already too late; in his absence a certain Aramaean chief,

Adad-apal-idinnam, actually occupied the capital behind his back, and set himself up there as an usurper. But these single events are here of less importance than the general effect of the invasions, which now flowed unchecked into all the lands about the lower courses of the two rivers. Aramaeans became the predominant element of the population in the whole of the plains between the Tigris and the eastern hills, and in the northern part of Babylonia, around Sippar and the capital itself; at about the same time the southern reaches of the Euphrates and the old Sea-land were overrun and permanently inhabited by the Chaldaeans, a kindred people of desert origin.

The change caused by this new population was fundamental. Up till now, in spite of many vicissitudes and even some historic invasions, the life of Babylonia had centred in and about the cities, each of which controlled the country about it, subject only to the varying claims of whosoever maintained for a while the rights of an overlord. History opens in these regions upon a group of cities constantly at feud for supremacy, and at most times masters of themselves and their lands, seldom much impaired in their freedom even by the most assertive overlords. This condition, not unlike that of the Greek cities before their absorption by Philip of Macedon, was ended by the Aramaean and Chaldaean invasions. The new order is drastically illustrated by what has already been related of the king who returned to find a tribesman

sitting upon his vacant throne; still more drastically by what happened to another king of Babylon in the tenth century, who could not even hold his New-year festival because the ritual required him to cross the river and go to Borsippa, and he durst not venture beyond his wall.[40] The incident has often been paralleled in modern times when a Pasha of Baghdad, Basrah, or Mosul has been compelled to look on helplessly while caravans or travellers were despoiled by the desert Arabs outside his gates. But the new "dwellers in Mesopotamia" were no longer nomads in the full sense, for they incorporated in such loose unities as they had the old peasants, and doubtless many of the actual incomers embraced an agricultural life, only the tribal aristocracy keeping up something of the nomad's distaste for settlement, and living by exaction from the cultivators. But the land, instead of its old division into the territory of cities, was now disparted into several large and rather vaguely defined areas known as "houses" of such-and-such a tribal ancestor; for example, the course of the Euphrates from Babylon down to the sea was occupied by the Chaldaean "houses" of Dakkuru, Sa'allu, Shilanu, Amukkanu, and Yakin.[41] Nothing is to be gathered as to the organization of these territories, for indeed they probably had little or none beyond a faint sentiment of unity and allegiance to their respective chiefs, a frail bond between inhabitants who were not for the most part tribesmen at all, but the former peasants under new masters.

In sharp contrast with this condition the great cities within their walls, even if pervaded by foreigners and divided by faction, could not lose their individuality, and consequently, although their fortunes are obscure in these centuries, they yet stand firm in the tide which floods over all around them, being constantly treated as separate from the tribes in the midst of whose domains they lay. Not seldom, indeed, they co-operated with the Chaldaeans, or admitted them within the walls, when it was a question of facing an external enemy, and it is obvious that in time their population would become almost indistinguishable from their neighbours, but for several centuries town and country were sharply divided, somewhat by race, more by mutual antipathy, and most by institutions political and religious. The idea of kingship and the elaborate, learned cults of old Babylonia (or rather of ancient Sumer), resided in the cities alone with little meaning or interest for the tribes.

From these generalities it is necessary to revert to what is known of Ur between the reign of Kurigalzu and the eighth century, when its concern begins with the conquering expeditions of the great Assyrian kings. It is pitifully little. Five hundred years of silence hang between the city's abandonment by Samsu-iluna and its repair under Kurigalzu; an even longer age has to pass dumbly away before much more is heard of its concerns. In view of the general catastrophe that had come upon the land it may certainly be assumed that these were years of long weakness and decay.

The titular kings still reigned in Babylon, but hardly outside its immediate surroundings, and seldom did their arm reach out to Ur or even their eyes turn in its direction. Doubtless the walls had often to resist the ragged attacks of invading tribes, and the gates to be slammed against swift surprises, but not a single detail of all this is recorded, and only a few transactions of private business [42] such as those which so illuminate the life of earlier ages. It is as though, politically, the place were dead, and yet it was merely in a trance, which we see broken for two moments only—the rest is a blank.

During the reign of the great Tiglath-pileser in Assyria there was war between him and the Babylonian king Marduk-nadin-akhe (pl. 28), which ended in the utter defeat of the latter and the capture of Babylon by the Assyrian army. But Marduk-nadin-akhe had some early success, and was able to plunder from his enemy's land certain divine statues; he was, then, a ruler of some energy, and his power was shown in Ur, neglected by the kings of Babylon for nearly three centuries. Inscriptions of his have been found on gate-sockets in the temple E-nun-makh, proclaiming his repair of that structure; it is somewhat noticeable that nearly all restorers of Ur—Kudur-Mabug, Kurigalzu, Marduk-nadin-akhe, and Nabonidus—each in their turn make E-nun-makh one of their first cares. The reason perhaps is that this place was always used as a depository for the temple valuables, as inscriptions testify,

and therefore must be kept in secure repair. Nothing else is known to have been done by Marduk-nadin-akhe in the city, and the performance of the next king whose name is found there was hardly more important. The Aramaean chief named Adad-apal-idinnam, who has already been seen occupying by surprise the throne of Babylon while the rightful king was away upon an embassy, was evidently a ruler of some account, for he is known to have been active at Nippur, Kish, and Borsippa, and now evidence of his rule has appeared also at Ur. There, about 1050, he seems to have found the sacred buildings still in tolerably good repair after their rebuilding by Kurigalzu, since, although calling himself "the renewer of E-gish-shir-gal for the Bright Riser, his lord," he did, in fact, very little. The bricks which bear his inscription have been found only in two patches of pavement, one of which is in the great courtyard, where the whole of the existing floor is perhaps of his laying, since Kurigalzu's pavement is immediately under it. No other remains of his work have as yet been discovered.

After this momentary flicker Ur sinks again into the now-familiar centuries of darkness. Indeed its history, or lack of it, since the ancient days of Samsu-iluna is as dispiriting to record as it must have been to enact. But the next incidents that fall to be described (there are no more before the end of the eighth century) at least show the city in a new relation, for they are incidents of Assyrian rather than Babylonian history. Doubtless at



MARDUK-NADIN-AKHE, KING OF BABYLON ABOUT B.C 1050, WHO REPAIRED CERTAIN BUILDINGS AT UR (see p. 207). The figure is sculptured on a stone inscribed with a deed of gift of an estate to a royal officer for distinguished service in a war against Assyria. Above are emblems of the gods under



MERODACH-BALADAN, KING OF BABYLON, THE RIVAL OF SARGON AND SENNACHERIB:

times of Assyrian overlordship, as under Tukulti-Enurta I, Tiglath-pileser I, or Shalmaneser III, although distant from Babylon the nominal capital, and little affected by its fortunes, Ur must have become familiar with the Assyrian rule; there was even an occasion (see above, p. 158) when one of the first kings of Ashur had "established the freedom" of Ur and other cities of the south. But since those days no Assyrian had made mention of Ur, or had any special concern with it. until Sargon II, who founded the last and greatest empire of Assyria in the last quarter of the eighth century. His concern in Babylonia, though indeed a necessary feature of Assyrian policy at this time, was a particular inheritance from his second predecessor, Tiglath-pileser III, who had actually assumed the title of king of Babylon, which Assyrian invaders usually avoided even when the real power was theirs by conquest. Tiglath-pileser, who reigned in Babylon under the name of Pul, had no occasion to concern himself with Ur, though he received rich presents from the celebrated Merodach-baladan (pl. 29), at that time chief of the "Sea-land," whose influence was perhaps even then supreme at Ur, and who was later to prove himself a dangerous enemy to the Assyrians.

This Chaldaean prince, whose family had ruled over the "Sea-land" or "House of Yakin" since their invasion of the marshes in the ninth century, early set himself to extend his authority beyond his own province, and openly aimed at the kingship

of Babylon. So long as Tiglath-pileser and his short-lived successor reigned in Assyria the Chaldaean maintained the attitude of submission which his gifts had marked, but used this period of inaction to begin the policy of courting the kings of Elam who, being exposed to equal danger from Assyrian attacks, were ready enough to welcome his advances, and in fact loyally supported him in all the rebellious episodes of his stormy career. Sargon, however, was an usurper, and his accession was doubtless accompanied by many of the disturbances that such an event always brings with it. This was the moment (721 B.C.) chosen by Merodach-baladan to unmask his plans, to proclaim himself king of Babylon, and thus openly to bid defiance to the new Assyrian ruler. Sargon, not yet totally secure at home, could ill afford to brook such a challenge from what the Assyrians probably regarded as the effete south, and therefore set out with too uncalculating haste to punish the rebel. Marching down east of the Tigris he arrived in the neighbourhood of Dêr to find himself confronted, not by the ill-knit tribes who now made up the Babylonian army, but by the formidable troops of Elam. Merodach-baladan had played for the first time the trick which he and his successors repeated with gratifying, if ignoble, success; he had contrived to be too late for the event. His absence made little difference, for his troops were unreliable, and a hard battle was fought between stouter opponents. The result was claimed as a victory by both sides, but was not so

indecisive as that would imply, for the practical outcome was that Sargon retreated, leaving a garrison in Dêr, and was unable to return that way for twelve years, during which Merodach-baladan enjoyed untroubled the sweets of a kingdom which his Elamite ally had so obligingly procured and defended for him. His methods at home were naturally directed to satisfying his tribesmen's appetite for plunder, which could be got only from the gathered wealth of the cities. All of these suffered from the depredations of the new king and his servants, who violated their immunities, alienated the citizens' property, robbed the temples of their revenue, and even imprisoned many of the inhabitants who dared to resist. Such excesses had the natural result of subverting Merodach-baladan's authority in Babylonia, while they also blinded him to the essential consideration of keeping the support of Elam. As events were to show, the Chaldaean was as reckless in prosperity as he was bold and prudent in adversity. Twelve years of lawless rule left him with the better part of his subjects estranged, and the Elamite alliance lapsed. Sargon had not forgotten, and his task was now easier, but he took care to use the inactivity of Elam in order first to secure his line of march by subduing the tribes between the Tigris and the Elamite border. In 710 all was ready for the attack, and Merodach-baladan's weakness was soon apparent; he abandoned Babylon without a blow struck, and retired to his fortified village in the marshes of Bit Yakin, which was soon

afterwards stormed by the Assyrian army, though the rebel himself escaped.

All these events belong to the general history of the land, but Ur had also an interest in them, as appears from the Assyrian records.[43] The reign of Merodach-baladan had been a time of disaster for all the cities of the south, which had been thrown as a prey to the tribes encamped about them. When Sargon completed his victory by assuming the now-vacant kingship of Babylon, he found everywhere the ravages of the late tyranny. Prominent citizens of Sippar, Babylon, Borsippa, and Nippur had been flung into captivity among the marshes, no doubt in order to open their purses to the Chaldaean's exactions, their lands had been confiscated and divided among the tribes. These sufferers were released and "caused to see the light" again. But worse than these private oppressions had been the tyrant's violation of the public rights of the cities. Their communal land had been sorely encroached upon, their gods removed, the sacred revenues diverted to private gain, and, worst of all, the citizens had been pressed into personal service at the *corvée* by the command of local sheikhs. Ur is mentioned in a list of half a dozen cities which had endured these injuries, and now received full restitution from the deliverer's hand; others were Eridu, Erech, and Larsa. The last decade of the eighth century must, then, have been a time of revival at Ur, but the city itself has given no traces of it. Sargon, though he built at Babylon and Kish, did nothing

further south beyond abolishing the abuses left by his predecessor. These episodes, good and evil, would therefore have remained hidden from us but for the few words devoted to them in the Assyrian's inscriptions. They are doubtless typical of many other passages in the city's history during these long centuries of silence, almost unbroken since the days of Kurigalzu, centuries of decline, poverty, and struggle to maintain something of the public cult and the private livelihood against the indifference or oppression of kings and the hostility of desert chiefs.

Ur makes another, and somewhat more important, appearance in the annals of the next reign, and the villain is still played by Merodach-baladan. This turbulent chief had learned in 710 to fear, perhaps even to respect, Sargon, but had not learned to eschew his hopes or his intrigues. The years following his defeat had certainly not been wasted in idleness, and when Sennacherib occupied his father's throne, in 705, these intrigues were already so far matured as to give hope, favoured by the unsettlement of a new reign, that another throw might win. The Chaldaean had never disguised to himself the worthlessness of his own followers, or indeed of his own leadership, in the field, and well knew that in the necessary appeal to force he must rely upon tougher men. In 710 he had been ruined by vain confidence in his own prosperity, which had deceived him into neglect of the essential alliance with Elam. The revival of this was his first care, once sobered by

defeat. It chanced that the Elamite king needed little solicitation, for Sargon's victory of 710, if it had been disastrous to Merodach-baladan, had been at least alarming to him, since it had brought the Assyrians directly to his frontiers by destroying the chain of Aramaean communities which had formerly masked them. Elam therefore was again, as in 721, prepared to do the fighting on behalf of her own menaced security, and Merodach-baladan was again prepared to enjoy the incidental fruits of victory as restored king of Babylon. So enviable a portion was not, indeed, obtained for nothing; the Elamite king, though moved by the artful representation of his own danger, nevertheless needed the stimulant of a large bribe, which, when all else was at stake, Merodach-baladan did not grudge. But this time he meant to leave nothing to chance, and sought other alliances as well. Of the Chaldaean and Aramaean tribes he was already sure, as their natural leader, and they, or he, had enough influence in the cities to bring their men and money into the cause. Thus Ur is seen again in company with Eridu, Larsa, Kullab, Nippur, and the northern centres of Cuthah and Borsippa, not now as the victims, but as the supporters, willing or reluctant, of their former tyrant. The Arabs under their queen Iati'e, and the Sutu of the western desert, were all brought in, and consented to escort agents in quest of still more distant adherents. "At that time," says the Book of Kings,* "Merodach-baladan, the

* Book II, ch. xx. 12, also Isaiah, ch. xxxix.

son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah"; that it was not a mere complimentary visit is shown by the action of Isaiah, who vigorously rebuked the king for showing favour to such dangerous envoys. This is all that the Old Testament tells of this singular incident, but it is not difficult to guess the purport of the letters; they suggested a revolt in Palestine as a useful diversion to aid the projected military effort of Elam and Babylonia. Had the plan succeeded Sennacherib must have been compelled to divide his forces. Fortunately for him, the king of Judah, though well enough disposed towards seditious counsels, could not at the time take action, and the Babylonian rising had to proceed with its unaided strength.

Merodach-baladan violently seized the kingdom of Babylon after the New-year festival of 703 B.C., and took immediate dispositions, with his Elamite advisers, to meet Sennacherib in the field. The surviving Assyrian account of the campaign is of unusual interest, but does not belong to the present purpose; the event proved a repetition of the disaster of 710, the Elamites lost their army, the Chaldaean lost his throne. That Ur was implicated in the rising is specifically mentioned in the Assyrian record, which names it first among the Babylonian allies. It is therefore very noticeable that it does not appear with all the other cities and districts overwhelmed by Sennacherib's sweep through the country after his victory. The omission can hardly be inadvertent, but the reason

for this one city's escape is quite uncertain. It would most naturally be assumed that the place was strong enough to defend itself, yet if so there is nothing known to account for its exceptional position. In any case Ur was the only participant to emerge with impunity, if without triumph, from the wreck of Merodach-baladan's ambition.

This was still not the last of Merodach-baladan, who lived on to trouble the peace of Chaldaea for several years longer. A new Assyrian campaign, though of minor importance, had to be organized against him in the year 700, and later still an expedition crossed the head of the Persian Gulf in an attempt to root out the faction of his supporters who had taken refuge in Elam. But these events, and the series of provocations which finally compelled Sennacherib to sack and destroy Babylon, have no special connexion with Ur, which makes its next appearance in the first year of the next Assyrian king. The accession of Esarhaddon was troubled by civil war, stirred up against him by his elder brothers who had murdered his father * out of resentment at being passed over in favour of a junior. Such an opportunity was not likely to be neglected by the Chaldaean malcontents, although Merodach-baladan himself was by this time dead. A son of his, Nabu-zêr-kenu-lishir, was quick to betray his disloyalty to the new sovereign; he imprisoned the messenger who announced the change of masters, failed to send the congratulations and

* See 2 Kings xix. 37.

presents suitable to the occasion, and soon gave open proof of rebellion. Raising his tribal levy he broke out of the marshes, and went up to pitch his camp against Ur. The city was at that time governed by a certain Ningal-iddina, who defended it in Esarhaddon's interest until the Assyrian governors of the neighbouring districts marched to his relief. The Chaldaean prince, with as little stomach for a fight as any of his house, did not await the attack, but decamped from before Ur, and fled, as usual, to Elam—"like a fox," says his Assyrian enemy. But the policy or caprice of a new Elamite king had changed, and the son of Merodach-baladan was murdered in the country of his old ally. Nothing now remained for the house of Yakin but submission, and the murdered sheikh's brother gave no more trouble to his overlord.

Ningal-iddina lived as governor of Ur while the reign of Esarhaddon ended and that of Ashur-banipal began. When the latter, at his accession, appointed his brother Shamash-shum-ukin as king of Babylon, Ur and the southern cities in general were not put under the authority of Babylon, but were governed directly from Nineveh. The dual monarchy, however unevenly balanced, endured for sixteen years, but there was every incentive to provoke dissatisfaction in the subordinate partner, all the influences which surrounded him were traditionally hostile to Assyria, and the materials of alliances which had well served Merodach-baladan were still at hand for any one who cared

to revive his schemes. However gradually Shamash-shum-ukin may have conceived the purpose to have done with his humiliating dependence, he plotted widely and acted boldly when his resolve was taken, and thus, in the year 652, entered upon the "brothers' war" in league with Elam, the Aramaean and Chaldaean princedoms, the Arabs, and even the pharaoh of Egypt. The four years of this war proved a time of exceptional stress for all concerned in it, and the issue was often in doubt before the final downfall and suicide of Shamash-shum-ukin; not for several generations had the position of an Assyrian king been so critical as Ashurbanipal's in this struggle. Soon after the outbreak of war Ningal-iddina [44] died, and it became a question who should succeed him; his son, Sin-ṭabni-uṣur, had a natural claim, but it was of prime importance that the new governor should be of unquestionable loyalty, and Sin-ṭabni-uṣur was not appointed without a special consultation of the omens written in the entrails of a slaughtered sheep. The question was whether he would remain faithful, or be seduced to the support of the "faithless brother"; the omens decided in his favour, and he was allowed to succeed his father.

In this the gods showed themselves less than omniscient, or less than gracious to the Assyrian king, for Sin-ṭabni-uṣur proved first a double-dealer and then an open traitor. His rule at Ur began with strife against the neighbouring tribe of the Gurasimmu, to get the better

of whom he successfully invoked the aid of Assyrian officers, under the pretence that the tribe was incited by agents of the king of Babylon. Thus secured at home Sin-ṭabni-uṣur began to display his real policy by instigating, and even leading, attacks upon the loyal city of Erech, concerning which reports were not long in reaching the Assyrian court. But the governor of Ur was plausible, or fortunate, enough to have these complaints discredited, even though some were preferred by his own brother. A new consultation of the entrails resulted in his favour, and the king caused a despatch to be sent to Ur vehemently affirming confidence in his servant. So critical, indeed, was the position in the south that the court was fain to conciliate even a doubtful supporter, that he might maintain his city against a countryside swarming with enemies. It is not, indeed, clear whether Sin-ṭabni-uṣur was a partisan of the Babylonian prince from conviction or whether his situation at Ur left him no alternative to betraying his lord, for it appears that Ur was at this time hard beset. In any case the governor finally made formal submission to the king of Babylon, but the act cost him his office, and the citizens of Ur continued to hold out for the Assyrians. In a letter to Ashurbanipal they protest their loyalty and lament the hardship it has brought upon them, insomuch that they may soon be brought to the last extremity of famine. To this pressure they attribute the treachery of Sin-ṭabni-uṣur—" distress and hunger have caused

him to revolt, and to grasp the feet of Shamash-shum-ukin." Unhappily it was still impossible to relieve the faithful city, but it appears that in spite of this its resistance was unbroken. The Gurasimmu tribe, its immediate neighbours, and the nearby city of Eridu, discouraged by waiting in vain for Assyrian relief, at last yielded to the rebel forces, but Ur itself, with the aid of two other cities, last refuges of Assyrian sovereignty in the south, heroically preserved until the final deliverance the Moon-god's treasures, enriched by gifts of past Assyrian kings. How the end of the city's trials was reached is not known, but it is a matter of general history that Ashurbanipal, after a period of exceptional danger, was favoured by discords in Elam, which paralysed the most powerful support of the rebels, and was thereby enabled gradually to re-establish his power in the south, and finally to besiege the remnant of the rebels in Babylon. For nearly two years the capital was defended until famine ended its resistance and the arch-rebel, the "faithless brother," cast himself amid the flames of his palace. It was the dramatic end which legend gave to "Sardanapallus," the last king of Assyria, the degenerate and artist in voluptuousness, who perished on the pyre which consumed the instruments of his luxury.

Evidently the king had convinced himself that Sin-ṭabni-uṣur's treachery was not characteristic of his family, for the governorship of Ur is next found in the hands of one Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi, a brother of the former. Before the accession of



Ashurbanipal, when he was still the crown-prince, this man is casually mentioned in a despatch as having sent a pound of gold to a member of the prince's household, a gift which already reveals the wealth later to be spent upon beautifying the city entrusted to his charge. Somewhat later, when Ashurbanipal had come to the throne, Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi was involved in the suspicions which fell upon his brother, and his favour at court was probably not increased by the fact that Shamash-shum-ukin had spoken for him. However, he seems to have taken a prominent part in the defence of Ur on behalf of the Assyrian king, for he captured a strong band of marauders who tried to terrorize the surrounding tribes, and probably he assumed the leadership of the city when his brother finally deserted to the rebels. Whatever else is known about him results from discoveries recently made at Ur itself. There he appears, rather surprisingly, as one of the great restorers of the public buildings which had received the scantest attention since the days of Kurigalzu, seven centuries before. He was evidently a man of great wealth, as shown by the rich gift which he had formerly sent to Ashurbanipal's household, but much more by the extent of the works which he now carried out in his own city. Several inscriptions of his record his building activity; in them he is content to assume the modest style of governor, and to dedicate his works for the life of his master Ashurbanipal. Presumably his labours began after the end of the Babylonian revolt (648),

during which it is possible that some of the city's chief structures had suffered the damage deplored by the governor's inscriptions, although years of neglect had perhaps more to do with it. It is on bricks [45] of his that we find the first mention of dilapidation to that most eminent and time-defying of all Ur's buildings, the ziggurrat, which had stood untouched by the hand of a restorer from the ancient days of Shulgi (2250) until the middle of the seventh century before Christ, and stands even to-day a noble ruin. Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi says that he "built it anew," but the remains show that it was only some repairs to the top stages which he undertook. The extent of these cannot now be judged, for they have been obliterated by the more important rebuilding done about a hundred years later by Nabonidus, whose own superstructure, too, has largely disappeared, leaving still, as by far the greatest part of the existing ruin, the pristine brickwork of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, now more than four thousand years old.

The terrace upon which the tower stood, and all its surroundings, were in a state of even greater decay. Its approaches were destroyed, and even its retaining-walls had fallen outwards, so that it could be reached only over a bank of fallen ruins, like the steep slope which led up to the top of the first stage before the recent clearance. The gates which formerly gave entrance to the enclosure had disappeared; their very sites had to be sought out by the restorers. Chief among these gates

was that which led through the old building called Dub-lal-makh, and here Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi rebuilt the entrance, and furnished it with a splendid door traversed by broad bands of copper, and embellished with fittings of gold and silver. This door turned upon a block of green serpentine (pl. 31), sculptured in the form of a coiled snake, with a socket for the doorpost hollowed in the snake's head, and underneath it a long ornamental inscription [46] describing the door which it supported. Dub-lal-makh occupied the east corner of the terrace which supported the ziggurrat; the south corner was also rebuilt by Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi, who found there in complete ruin the ancient temple of Nin-gal, wife of the Moon-god, untouched since the time of Kurigalzu. It is evident that only a few stumps of walls were visible to the Assyrian governor, for though he simply built upon old foundations where he could see them, a great part of the temple had disappeared altogether and the new work was set out on a different plan. Not much of it now remains, for the temple was soon again to be repaired by Nabonidus, but thirteen inscribed cones were found under the floor of the sanctuary, showing where stood the statue of Nin-gal that was fashioned anew and ceremonially brought in to dwell there. As with all Babylonian builders it was a point of religion with Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi to seek out the ancient form of temples which he proposed to build up again. Trenches were dug to uncover the old walls under their cloak of earth, and priests attended the workmen in order to

celebrate the due rites when the god vouchsafed a discovery of his former shrine, since it was not to be doubted that this implied favour to the ruler thus admitted to the privilege of housing him afresh. A certain singer in the temple service, named Nabu-shum-iddina, has left inscribed upon a small clay pedestal [47] his copy of an old brick of Bur-Sin (sixteen centuries before his day) which the workmen turned up in digging for the foundations. He was so much impressed by the venerable age of this relic that he wished to set a facsimile of it before the eyes of his own generation. Unhappily it is clear that Nabu-shum-iddina, though doubtless a learned man after his fashion, had more enthusiasm than knowledge of antiquity, for specimens of the same Bur-Sin brick-inscription have come down even to us, and the priest's version is so miscopied and distorted that we may be sure he scarcely understood two lines of it.

CHAPTER VII

# LAST DAYS OF UR

THE local patriotism of Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi had enabled Ur to shine with a little radiance of its own in the very noonday of the universal despot's fortunes, for, after the triumph over the Babylonian rebellion and the conquest of Elam, the world of western Asia seemed to hold none but slaves of the Assyrian emperor. Yet the impending change which was to shatter all this was so sudden and complete that it afforded a dramatic illustration for moralists on the instability of human affairs, and continued for centuries to astonish a world which had long since ceased to feel any of its immediate effects. In the reign of Sennacherib, at the beginning of the seventh century, the Assyrian army had come into conflict with Ionian Greeks in Cilicia, and since that time, at least, Greeks had become more or less familiar with the Assyrian empire and the concerns of its western provinces. When, therefore, in 612, after little more than twenty years of decline, Assyria perished under the ruins of Nineveh amid the frenzied rejoicings of its former subjects, the report of it was soon noised abroad in the Greek world, where the tale of this disaster, tremendous

enough in its bare details, was heightened by concentrating in one figure the abuse of boundless prosperity and the tragedy of a prodigal's death amid the flames of his riotous palace. In Sardanapallus, the hero or villain of this tragedy, the Greeks kept the memory of Ashurbanipal (it is the same name, slightly corrupted), but the truth is that this king, even if he was the original of the libertine, could not have been the suicide, magnificent even in despair, for he was dead long before the destruction of his capital.

The last years and end of Assyria belong to general history, so far indeed as there is anything to relate of them, for the records cease about 640 and from that year until 616 there is scarcely anything to tell. But the reign of Ashurbanipal certainly ended in universal troubles, which probably lost nearly all of the vast dominions which his predecessors and he himself had won. Amid this obscurity even the date of his death is lost, but 626 is the year usually named. Whether this be correct or not, that year is memorable for another reason. After the suppression of the Babylonian revolt the throne of Babylon was filled by a king named Kandalanu, a nominee of Ashurbanipal, though some less probably think that Kandalanu was simply the name under which Ashurbanipal himself ruled in Babylon. In either case the reign of Kandalanu ended in 626, and the kingship of Babylon passed to Nabopolassar. This man, though he affects a language of exaggerated humility in his inscriptions, was apparently

of no mean ancestry, for he seems to have been the son of Bel-ibni, governor of the Sea-land, who had been a faithful vassal of Ashurbanipal during the wars with his brother and with Elam. If so, he was the hereditary prince of the " house of Yakin " and thus descended from a family which, despite periods of subservience, had a long tradition of hatred against Assyria since the days of Merodach-baladan. He had succeeded to the kingdom of the Sea-land during the dark years at the end of Ashurbanipal's life, and in 626, either because of the latter's death, or simply because the moment was favourable, he occupied Babylon and broke out into armed defiance of the Assyrian rule. The powerless successor of Ashurbanipal could do little against him, and Nabopolassar at first could attempt nothing but ineffectual raids against the southern cities which still owed allegiance to Assyria. His later success was won by the traditional policy of his house, enlisting the military aid of stouter allies. Elam was now prostrate, but its place in this scheme was taken by the new power of the Medes under their great leader Cyaxares, of whose achievements Herodotus has much to tell. With all the artifice of his forbears Nabopolassar allowed his allies to do all the serious fighting, himself hastening to the battlefield with a speed which permitted him to arrive on the day after the action. At length, in 612, Nineveh was stormed by the Medes with some nominal help from the Babylonians; therewith Nabopolassar became undisputed master of Babylonia and

succeeded to the former claims of Assyria to the mastery in the west. Here he was for some time opposed by a remnant of Assyrians who had re-established their kingdom in the city of Harran, with the support of Egyptian armies sent by the Saite kings of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, who had, through fear of the barbarians, allied themselves with their former enemies the Assyrians. Harran was captured by the Median and Scythian armies in 610, but the final decision was delayed until 605, when Necho the Egyptian was completely defeated at Carchemish by the Babylonian forces under the crown-prince Nebuchadrezzar, who had at this time virtually succeeded his father. By this battle the last Babylonian empire, as short-lived as brilliant, was securely founded, and Nabopolassar lived just long enough to see his work completed.

Among all kings of the ancient east his successor, Nebuchadrezzar, bears the most famous name, and his achievements were equal to his fame, though much that is related about him must be regarded as legendary; it now seems evident, for example, that the strange stories in the Book of Daniel, so far as they are historical at all, have more to do with a later king than with Nebuchadrezzar himself. But among all the greatness of his reign at home and abroad that which most dazzled his age was the splendour to which he restored the cities of his kingdom. Babylon became one of the wonders of the world, with its miles of gigantic walls, its brazen gates, its temple and tower of

Bel, and its " hanging gardens." Even the pitiful ruins which have been upturned by the modern excavator's spade show how completely the old city was swept away or buried to make space for the new magnificence, of which a few imposing structures and a few fragments of their decoration remain to witness to the present day. But not only in the capital was Nebuchadrezzar a mighty builder. Nearly all the ancient cities of his land owed the repair of their temples to his lavish piety or ostentation, so that a traveller passing over the ruined mounds of cities still unidentified in the desert of Iraq and picking up fragments of brick with stamped inscriptions will most often read upon them the name of Nebuchadrezzar.

In this widespread activity of building Ur was not neglected, and a fair amount of evidence for what Nebuchadrezzar did there has been obtained by excavation, though very little of his actual work remains. This is true even of the most imposing task which he completed, the rebuilding of the great double wall which surrounded the whole sacred area and divided the " city of the gods " from the profane quarters of the town. This wall enclosed a roughly rectangular *temenos*, though its corresponding sides were of unequal length, the mean dimensions being 390 × 220 metres. It was built of unbaked brick throughout, except for the gate-posts, and therefore appears nowhere above the modern surface of the ground, for such walls, massive as they must have been when newly erected, were entirely at the

mercy of the weather, and became disintegrated in a very short time. The total thickness of this wall at Ur was no less than 11½ metres, but the construction was hollow, the width being made up by inner and outer walls enclosing intra-mural chambers, which accounted for nearly a half of the total width. The faces of the wall, both inside and outside, were relieved by a series of shallow buttresses at regular intervals and by double-sunk grooves, both on the buttresses and on the spaces between them, a multiplication of vertical lines which must have given a very lofty appearance to the whole work. Access to this sacred area was obtained by gates, of which there were at least six, though not all were made at the same time, and all had often been repaired. The one that probably owed most to Nebuchadrezzar was that nearest to the north corner of the enclosure. It lay in a deep recess of the wall, and its entrance stood almost exactly opposite to the gate leading into the great courtyard of Kurigalzu, which extended right back to the ziggurrat. It seems evident that this entrance was devised by Nebuchadrezzar as part of a great transformation which he imposed upon the ancient temples in the sacred area. Enough remains to show that he repaved the courtyard at a higher level than Kurigalzu and Adad-apal-iddinam, and therewith abolished the division between the courtyard and the ziggurrat. A great paved expanse now ran up to the foot of the stairways ascending the tower, and in the northern angle of the stairways

a new sanctuary of the Moon-god was built, of which hardly anything now remains. Thus the whole northern end of the enclosure was turned into a single temple on the plan customary at that period, the sanctuary facing out upon an extensive court, in the far corner of which was a well; this also was sunk by Nebuchadrezzar, perhaps for the first time.

An equally drastic alteration was made in the plan of the only other building which this king seems to have taken in hand. The ancient temple called E-nun-makh, continually restored by kings in ages widely separated, but always hitherto upon the same plan, was completely altered by Nebuchadrezzar. Only the old sanctuary was kept in its primitive form, but the ranges of long narrow rooms which had up till then surrounded it on three sides were all filled in and an open courtyard laid out with brick paving over them, thus producing a smaller replica of the shrine under the ziggurrat, with the whole of the great court in front of it. These two examples seem to prove that Nebuchadrezzar consciously introduced certain changes in the ritual of the Moon-god's worship, tending to give it a more public character; the whole city might now stand and see performed before its eyes ceremonies which had once been jealously hidden amid a maze of dark passages. It is strongly reminiscent of the action which is ascribed to him in the Book of Daniel, when he "made an image of gold" and "set it up in the plain of Dura,"

commanding all "people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up." What motive he had for making this change cannot at present be discerned, but it probably had in it something both of religion and politics. That age was, in fact, one of powerful stirrings which profoundly affected even the Babylonian beliefs, though consolidated by so many centuries, indeed millennia, of uninterrupted sway. The reactions of rival doctrines become still clearer in the time of Nabonidus, a decade later, both because that prince is more communicative in his inscriptions concerning his religious arrangements, and because there are more outside sources contributing to the history of his reign.

The few years which intervened between the death of Nebuchadrezzar and the accession of Nabonidus were troubled by instability of the rulers. Awel-Marduk (called Evil-Merodach in the Old Testament), a degenerate son of the great Nebuchadrezzar, disappeared after a very short and inglorious reign. He was succeeded by Neriglissar who, though seemingly an energetic ruler, died after only three years, leaving a young son, Labashi-Marduk, who mounted the throne only to be at once deposed as having no lawful claim to succession. The situation at that time caused much anxiety, for the Medes had taken



Inscription on the base of a green stone door-socket, in form of a serpent, which supported a splendid door set up by Sin-balatsu-iqbi, governor of Ur under Ashurbanipal (see p. 223) (After *Antiquaries' Journal*, V, pl. XLI)

advantage of Nebuchadrezzar's death to establish their power in Syria, and Babylon stood in great fear of their further designs. The danger was obviously increased by lack of a strong government at home, yet it was now difficult to find a legitimate candidate for the kingship whom all parties could accept. Finally, the choice fell upon Nabonidus, destined thus to be the last native king of Babylon. All that is certain about his origin is that he was not by birth a Babylonian at all,[48] for a parent of his, father or mother, served throughout a long life as priest of the Moon-god in the northern Syrian city of Harran, which, as a seat of this god's worship, ranked second only to Ur itself; it has often been observed, even if only a coincidence, that the story of Abraham's wanderings takes him in one stage from the southern dwelling of the Moon-god (Ur) to the northern (Harran). Nabonidus was presumably a child in Harran when that city was garrisoned by the fugitive Assyrian remnant from Nineveh, and when, in 610, it fell before the Scythians and Babylonians, the boy was among the captives who were taken away to Babylon. It is a reasonable conclusion that his mother went with him and that, being of noble family, she was assigned to the harim of the conqueror Nabopolassar, or more probably of his son Nebuchadrezzar. Some such connexion with the ruling house must have existed, or he would certainly not have been called to the throne with the assent, if not the enthusiasm, of all the citizens.

Nabonidus was distinguished above his predecessors by religious zeal, which led him into certain unpopular excesses, but at least proved very advantageous to the old cult-centres of his kingdom. Although his particular care was lavished upon Harran, yet the capital together with Ur, Erech, Larsa, Sippar, and other places enjoyed his lavish patronage. His inscriptions have much to say about the pious works which he undertook with as much scrupulosity as bounty on behalf of the great gods, nor is there wanting the unmistakable touch of zealotry in his criticisms of the neglect, the superficiality, or the mistakes of his predecessors. Priding himself upon restoring the old buildings exactly in their former places, "not a finger's breadth beyond or behind" the ancient foundation, he must have viewed Nebuchadrezzar's work at Ur with much disapproval, for he built again E-nun-makh, which can hardly have needed it after Nebuchadrezzar's recent labours, and he also built on and around the ziggurrat, where also he may well have modified some of the earlier king's drastic rearrangements. Of what he did at E-nun-makh no trace remains but scattered bricks inscribed with his name, for the whole temple was once again cleared and laid out afresh a few years later.

He has, however, left an account of his work upon the ziggurrat, and some of it, indeed, remains there still to show the actual extent of his repairs. The account is inscribed upon a number of small cylinders (pl. 32) which were

first found by Mr. Taylor in 1854 when making his pioneer explorations of Tell al-Muqayyar, and it is of interest to recall that it was these cylinders which, when read by Sir Henry Rawlinson, first revealed that here was buried that famous "Ur of the Chaldees," the very site of which had been lost to the knowledge of man for more than two thousand years. The king relates that he found an inscription of the ancient kings Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, which set forth that the ziggurrat had been begun by the one and finished by the other. When the ziggurrat was explored in 1923–24 a deep hole was found at the east corner of the second stage, where Nabonidus' workmen had searched for the old foundation deposit, and doubtless obtained the tablet to which he refers. No mention is made of Sin-balaṭsu-iqbi, whose bricks prove that he also repaired the tower, but evidently his work was unimportant and Nabonidus either did not notice it or would not condescend to speak of it. From the existing remains it is obvious that he found the whole superstructure and the approaches in a ruinous condition, for the three upper stages were completely rebuilt, and fresh steps and parapets fitted to the magnificent triple stairway, partly with bricks that had been made and stamped for use in E-nun-makh. What kind of building had stood at the top before his time it is impossible to say, but innumerable fragments of the material show that Nabonidus crowned the tower with a small chapel built of rich blue-enamelled bricks. Since the very foundations

have disappeared there is no guide to the plan of this, but it must have been quite small, for the third stage, on which it stood, provided only a narrow site. Nebuchadrezzar, referring to another place, expressly says that he built the top of the ziggurrat in blue bricks, and there is a phrase in the prologue to Hammurabi's code of laws which may indicate a like practice fifteen centuries before;[49] from Nabonidus' topmost building at Ur there have survived hundreds of fragments of these baked bricks, some stamped with his name, covered with a thick and lustrous enamel of dark-blue colour.

Little is known about the function of the ziggurrats in Babylonian religion, but the shrine at the top must have been that which Herodotus saw more than a hundred years later on the tower of Babylon, which contained, he says, nothing but a great and fair-strewn bed, with a golden table beside it. The Chaldaean priests told this inquisitive Greek (who thought they were romancing) that the occupant of this chamber was one of the native women chosen by the god, who came himself and passed his nights there. Yet they told him nothing but the truth, at least as they conceived it; what they did not add, however, was the rank of the "native woman" thus favoured by the god's choice. Perhaps this was because at Babylon the priestesses were of no specially dignified position, but at Ur there was a very ancient tradition which required, at least from kings of marked piety, that the high priestess

of the Moon-god should be no other than the king's daughter herself; perhaps, indeed, this dedication was expected from every ruler. There is now proof that the great Sargon of Agade had installed his daughter in this office, with the name or title of Enheduanna, and the same was done by Kudur-Mabug, for it is recorded that a tablet bearing his daughter's name, as high-priestess, was found by Nabonidus himself in clearing the ground for another of his undertakings. Upon a clay cylinder [50] found at Ur he caused to be inscribed a detailed relation of his own proceedings in this matter. "When Nannar," it begins, "desired a priestess, the son of the prince revealed his sign to the peoples, the god of the bright rising made clear his true decision. . . . In the month of Elul, the thirteenth day, the month of the work of the goddesses, the 'fruit-god' [*i.e.* the moon] grew dark and entered on his eclipse. 'Sin desires a priestess'—such was his portent and his decision." Moved by this ominous sign the king used divination to ascertain clearly the Moon-god's will. He slaughtered a sheep before the oracle-gods Shamash and Adad, and the disposition of the entrails signified their "true assent," that is, they confirmed the correctness of his inference that the eclipse of the moon betokened the god's desire of a priestess. New inquiries, again by consultation of the entrails, sought who should be appointed:—"I asked concerning the daughters of my family, they answered 'no.' I asked a third time concerning my own daughter, they answered me with a

favourable omen." Nabonidus thereupon dedicated his daughter straightway as priestess of the Moon-god, changing her name to Bel-shalṭi-Nannar, and she it was, no doubt, who henceforth occupied on nights of solemnity the blue chapel at the top of the ziggurrat.

Her father, having appointed a priestess, now had to provide her lodging, and for this purpose he was obliged to repair the ancient building called E-gipar, in which the priestesses of old had dwelt. This place has been found, sadly ruined, by the excavators, but its material remains and the description which Nabonidus himself has left of it illustrate each other vividly. The site is a rectangle, about one hundred yards long and half as wide, the northern end of which incorporates the gate-sanctuary of Dub-lal-makh. In front of this a wide courtyard extends, adjoined on the other side by four blocks of chambers, which are evidently living apartments, and, as usual, there is a well, originally with a well-house, in a corner of the court. The gate-sanctuary was only repaired; its plan and main structure continued to be very much as Kurigalzu, many centuries before, had left them. Connecting this building with the wall of E-nun-makh there had been a line of rooms, now almost denuded away, which were the "lying place of the old priestesses" mentioned in the inscription. After designating his daughter for the priesthood and changing her name Nabonidus set himself to find out the correct ritual for her consecration. He says that, when

the appointed time came for him to open the gates (of Dub-lal-makh ?) "I looked and saw the old memorial inscription of Nebuchadrezzar, son of Enurta-nadin-shum, [*i.e.* Nebuchadrezzar I] * a former king, who drew the figure of a priestess whereon were a snake, her symbols of office, her dress, and her —— (?)" Various other antiquities were found by the king's workmen in clearing the site, and religiously preserved by him in his new building—"the old tablets, originals and copies, I brought out, a water-wheel (?) like the old one I made." The latter reference is doubtless to the well in the corner of the courtyard, but the modern explorers have found most interesting specimens of the "old tablets" which Nabonidus collected with such evident pleasure. It appears, in fact, that he set up a kind of museum in a small room hard by the sanctuary, for there still remained buried in its ruins a stone inscription of Shulgi, a clay cone of Kudur-Mabug, a few ancient tablets, a massive granite mace-head, a Kassite "boundary-stone," and finally the copy from the ancient brick of Bur-Sin made so proudly (but so incorrectly !) by the scribe Nabu-shum-iddina.† The clearance being done, and all the incidental finds collected and admired by the antiquarian king, he built anew the lodging of the priestess; how long she occupied it is unknown, but it is not likely that her authority lasted longer than her father's reign.

* See above, p. 203. No trace of any work of Nebuchadrezzar I has hitherto been found at Ur.

† See above, p. 224.

In addition to the works already described, Nabonidus opened a wide gate in the wall of the sacred area directly under the south-west side of the ziggurrat, where a canal ran close under the wall outside, and thus gave direct access to gods and men coming in by boat. The doors of this entrance turned upon stones [51] which the king inscribed with a summary of his beneficent works to the city, and just within it was lately found the ancient headless statue of Entemena,* almost certainly headless already when it was found in some ruin by Nabonidus' workmen, and set up anew for the wonder of the "moderns," exactly as it was found again but a few years ago, and, after a long voyage oversea, now rests in Baghdad. The last care of Nabonidus was to reconstitute the priestly offices of the Moon-god, and to assure their maintenance. This he did by assigning to the god's service regular offerings of every kind (out of which it was customary for the priests to draw their own sustenance), and by directing that no services should be required, nor imposts exacted from them, an immunity which was theirs by ancient right, but which had fallen into disuse or perhaps had been violated.

With this the work of Nabonidus at Ur was completed. He had done more for the official buildings and institutions, that is, the temple and priesthood, of the city than any king since Kurigalzu eight hundred years before. Whether he restored any real life to the senile body is much

* See above, p. 78 ff.

more doubtful; there is so far (most ominous of symptoms) a complete lack of business records belonging to his reign. This indeed may be an accident, for it is to be remembered that excavation has scarcely touched as yet the private quarters of the town, from which commercial documents may still be recovered to illuminate various ages at present unrepresented. But their absence must, with this reservation, be considered a sign that there was little prosperity to support the rather ambitious organism which the royal piety had revived. Enough is known of Nabonidus to explain his assiduity in restoring the cult of the Moon-god, even if the city had fallen somewhat below the splendour appropriate to its ages-old prestige.

Ur was not, indeed, alone in the favours it enjoyed at this king's hand, for his beneficent vigour was displayed in several more of the old cities, not to mention Babylon, his capital, but there is only one other temple to which he displayed equal devotion, and to the restoration of which he devoted nearly as much space in his inscriptions. That was the Moon-temple of Harran, the north-Syrian city far outside the boundaries of Sumer and Akkad, and therein lies the motive for his particular attention to Ur. It has been mentioned above that Nabonidus was a native of Harran, and that his parents stood high in the priesthood of the Moon-god there. To this god, therefore, he was particularly attached, and hence came his special zeal to re-establish both the

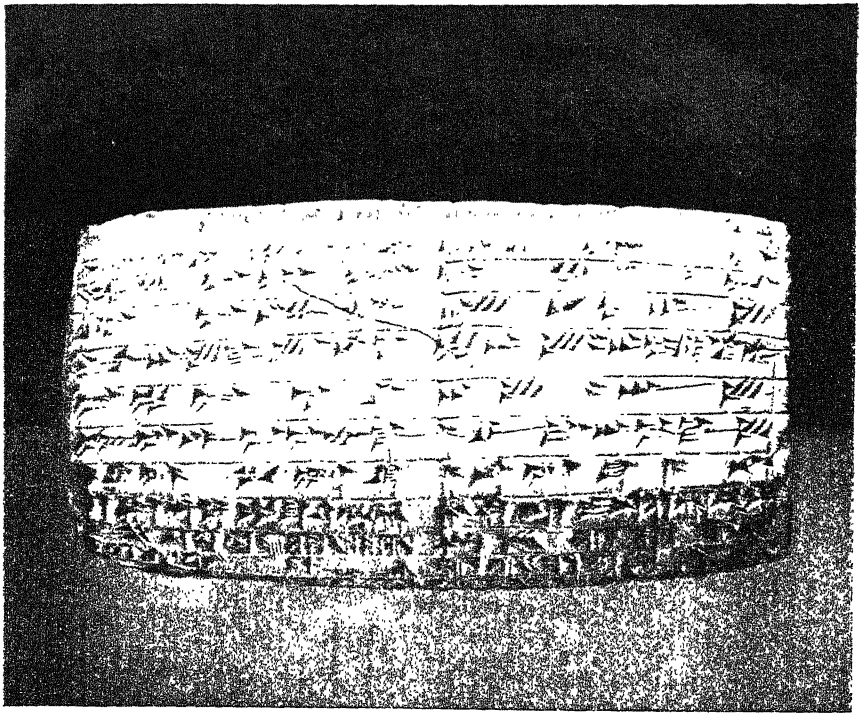
principal seats of his worship. There was certainly a deep tinge of fanaticism in the king's devotion to the god in whose service his boyhood and youth had been spent, but it was his peculiar misfortune that half, at least, of his enthusiasm should have been centred upon what the Babylonians considered a "foreign" city, especially as his exaltation of the Moon-god seemed to detract from the traditional pre-eminence of Bêl-Marduk, the ruler of the pantheon according to the ideas of the capital. Moreover, for political reasons which are still anything but clear, Nabonidus spent actually the greater part of his reign absent not only from Babylon but from his kingdom, in a distant province at the desert town of Tema in northern Arabia. He had led an expedition against this remote place in his third year, when the restoration of Harran was completed; he slew the local chief and built himself a palace there in the Babylonian style. But instead of returning to Babylon he remained in this outpost until his eleventh year, or perhaps longer. One apparently minor, but important, result of this was that the great New Year festival in the capital could not be held during all this time because the king's presence was indispensable for the performance of the central acts of the ritual. This slight to Marduk, whether enforced or intentional, was most bitterly resented by the priests, who affected to believe that the king was possessed by devils, and easily imparted their feelings to the vulgar. Party spirit, as usual, turned readily into treason,

favoured by the great change which had suddenly come over the military situation of western Asia. When Nabonidus came to the throne he could count himself second only, if not equal, in power to the king of the Medes, who had held sway over the northern provinces of the old Assyrian empire ever since their conquest of Nineveh in 612 and of Harran in 610. Nabonidus' longing to rebuild Harran at the outset of his reign seemed to be frustrated by the presence of the Medes there; he had resigned himself to this when a new factor suddenly altered the whole position.

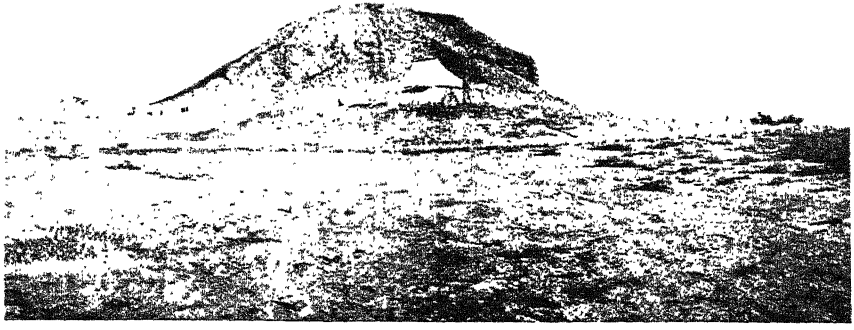
Cyrus, king of Persia, was one of those magnetic figures which drew to themselves a host of oriental legends even before their death, and grew ever greater in perspective as their lives receded into the past. Such were Gilgamesh, Sargon of Akkad, "Semiramis," and Nebuchadrezzar before him, and such was Alexander after him. A most circumstantial account of his early days has come down to us in the early pages of Herodotus, and a more consciously artificial biography was compiled by Xenophon with the aim of inspiring youth by an heroic example. In these histories much must be set down to legend, especially the almost unique touch of romanticism which delighted to raise the mightiest kings from servile obscurity. As Sargon was related to have been exposed to the river by a mother too poor to nourish him, and rescued only by a humble gardener, so Cyrus, though indeed of noblest birth, grew up as the child of a herdsman. The certain facts known

about his origin are few, but he was in any case hereditary king of the land called from very ancient days Anshan, that is a district in southern Elam, not far from the city of Susa, and the descendant of a line which traced its ancestry back to Achaemenes, four generations removed from Cyrus. In succession to his father Cambyses (the first of that name) he held his principality as a vassal to Astyages, the reigning king of Media, who divided with the Babylonian king those domains which had been wrested from the extinct power of Assyria. This subjection, which had seemed tolerable enough to his father, a man "of a good house, and of nature remisse and quiet," was little to the taste of the young Cyrus, who at once began to conspire against the Median lordship.

He found an ally ready at hand in Nabonidus, himself also new to the throne, and doubly incensed both by the Median rape of Syria from Babylonian possession, and by the vexation that this had taken his beloved Harran out of his reach. Nabonidus describes a dream which he gave out as having visited him at his accession. The great god Marduk appeared, commanding him to take up bricks with his horses and chariots, and to restore therewith the Moon-temple at Harran. "Fearfully I spoke to the lord of the gods, saying, 'O Marduk, that temple which thou dost command me to rebuild, the Mede surrounds it and he is exceeding strong.'" In reply the god announced that the obstacle should soon be removed—"what time the third year comes round, the gods will



(*a*)



(*b*)

(*a*) Clay cylinder with inscription of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, giving a summary of the history of the ziggurrat, and concluding with a prayer for Belshazzar, the king's son. It was this inscription which revealed the site of Ur.
(*b*) Ur in desolation; the ziggurrat-mound (Tell al-Muqayyar) in 1919.

cause Cyrus to advance against him, Cyrus king of Anshan, his little slave, with his little army." And so indeed it happened, for in 550 Cyrus wound up a series of attacks against his former lord by a decisive battle in which the troops of Astyages deserted and the king himself fell into the hands of his "little slave." The object of the allies being thus achieved, an estrangement between them was not long in arising. After carrying out his cherished scheme of rebuilding Harran Nabonidus departed to his long retirement in Tema, leaving the management of affairs at home to his son Belshazzar.

Meanwhile Cyrus was extending his conquests far and wide, and carrying his arms into Asia Minor, where in 547 Croesus and his Lydian kingdom at last fell before him. With so much accomplished he was ready now to play for the highest prize of all, the wealth of Babylonia and ultimately of Egypt. To this end he was helped by the disaffection of Gobryas, a powerful Babylonian governor who controlled an extensive district east of the Tigris; this man had, when the quarrel arose between the former allies, thrown in his lot with Cyrus in defiance of his lawful sovereign. Subsequently, an influential part of the actual citizens of Babylon had been alienated by the proceedings of Nabonidus; they misunderstood his absence from the capital, they resented the discontinuance of the New Year festival, and they insulted the absorption of the king in outlandish forms of worship. Propaganda,

no doubt inspired by Persian agents, was active against him, and there has survived till to-day part of an unscrupulous tract [52] which the populace was taught to recite in doggerel verse and with seditious clamour, denouncing his alleged unrighteous acts. He is charged with oppression of his subjects, with countenancing the private illegalities of court sycophants, with blasphemy against the state religion inspired by hellish influences, and, above all, with instituting a new and travestied form of Moon-worship.

The last accusation, though doubtless as perfidious as the rest, is of special interest in view of the king's deep concern with the restoration of the Moon-god's service at Ur. Nothing is known, indeed, of the ritual arrangements which Nabonidus ordered there, but all that can be gathered from his own inscriptions, such as the dedicating of his daughter as high-priestess, seems to be unimpeachably orthodox. The hostile pamphlet describes the form and attributes given by him to a new statue of the Moon-god which he made for his new temple at Harran. This statue was for some reason very shocking to the priests of the capital who refused to admit that it represented the god at all. Nevertheless this view was purely Babylonian; it may well be that Nabonidus made his god in the image which was familiar to the Harranians, but political rancour suggested to his opponents that they should use the description of this unfamiliar image to inflame the ignorant passions of the commons.

There is, unfortunately, no reference in this libel to the cult at Ur, but from another source it is evident that the professedly conservative and pro-Persian faction was equally scandalized by the king's proceedings there. In the broken lines which introduce a long inscription of Cyrus, found at Babylon upon a clay cylinder, a series of reproaches is cast against the deposed Nabonidus, in terms not dissimilar to those of the pamphlet. Among these an imperfect line reads ". . . at Ur and the rest of the cities a ritual that did not befit them [he instituted]." It would be of the utmost interest to know whether he did, in fact, what he himself claimed, and restored the ancient rites, or whether he sought to impose Harranian ideas upon the southern city of the Moon. The question cannot be answered, but it is quite possible that, in reinstating the ancient ritual, he passed for an innovator, the people having forgotten it. The remains certainly suggest, as noticed above, that Nebuchadrezzar in his time had actually made revolutionary changes—if the laity had forgotten the former rites, or the priests found the new more to their advantage, there would be reason enough for the outburst of indignation at Nabonidus' pious efforts.

It is not to the purpose here to relate the story of the downfall of Babylon, the end of the last native dynasty, and the accession of the Persian line of kings, destined to remain in power until the coming of Alexander. At last, warned by danger at home, which his son Belshazzar could no longer

withstand, the king returned from distant Tema, and once more the New Year feast was celebrated. It must be some such occasion as this which supplied the original to the dramatic story of Belshazzar's feast, in the Book of Daniel, when, in the midst of wine and sacrilege, "in the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace," and the interpretation of the last word written was, "thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Harassed by the gathering danger Nabonidus now sent to gather into Babylon the gods of all the cities in his land, if perchance they might avail him, or perhaps with the view of protecting them at least within his impregnable walls. Among these the Moon-god doubtless came up from Ur, for only three cities, Sippar, Borsippa, and Cuthah, refused to part with their gods. Whatever his motive, the king's action was most bitterly resented by priests and local patriots, and the first, most popular, act of Cyrus was to send back the gods to their several homes. But nothing could now save Nabonidus from a triumphant enemy without and a disaffected element within; his son Belshazzar perished in battle at Opis, seeking to hinder the Persian from crossing the river; Gobryas and his army marched upon the capital which was betrayed to him without a blow struck, and Nabonidus taken prisoner —the elaborate story of a siege and the diversion of the river, which Herodotus heard and has

recounted, springs from the traitors themselves, and was concocted to veil their own baseness.

With the victory of Cyrus Babylonia became what it had never been before in its age-old history, the province of a foreign despot. Conquerors from abroad had, indeed, subdued it in the past, but, when they came on more than a mere plundering raid, they had settled in the land and become recognized as the holder for the time of that "royalty" which in theory had come down again from heaven after the Flood and never disappeared, wheresoever it might chance at the moment to abide. But the Achaemenid kings never even affected to be other than foreigners; when not at war they dwelt mainly at one of their Persian palaces, and even their visits to Babylon were probably few, although, as Herodotus informs us, it was by far the richest and most productive in tribute of their satrapies. Moreover, they were further estranged from their Babylonian subjects by a difference in religion, being, at least from the time of Darius, strict adherents of the Zoroastrian faith, which they do not appear to have relaxed in favour of the Babylonian pantheon even so much as they deemed it politic to do in Egypt, where the frantic Cambyses himself, in spite of his tyrannous sacrileges, atoned for them by various acts of piety. This intolerance, however, was not displayed by Cyrus himself. After his victory, gained as much by the efforts of his supporters in Babylon as by his own military conduct, it was at least wise, if not indispensable, to maintain the

character of champion of the true worship against the alleged heresies of Nabonidus, particularly as the strength of his faction was undoubtedly the malcontent priesthood. This gesture was, perhaps, the easier to make since it is not certain that Cyrus himself was ever a Zoroastrian. However that may be, his first action was to undo all the work of Nabonidus. The gods which had been collected in Babylon were sent back to their own cities, and the new reformer complacently records the gratitude which rewarded his zeal. Even to distant Jerusalem the king signified his pleasure that the captive servants of Jehovah should return with Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, taking "the vessels of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth," and rebuild the destroyed temple.

There can be little doubt that the Moon-god of Ur now returned with pomp to his city, for on a broken cylinder [53] found there, Cyrus says: "Sin, the illuminator (?) of heaven and earth with his favourable sign delivered into my hands the four quarters of the world (and) I returned the gods to their shrines." But there is even more material evidence than this, for under Cyrus, and doubtless in his first year, as preparation for the god's return, the last building operations of which any trace remains were undertaken at Ur. The southernmost of the gates in the north-east side of the wall round the sacred enclosure was renovated, and fitted with new doors, by Cyrus, who stamped his inscription upon the bricks [54] with

which the hinge-stones were surrounded. Almost in the words of the "proclamation" which he made in favour of the Jews,* he declares "the great gods have delivered all the lands into my hand, the land I have caused to dwell in a peaceful habitation." Such an inscription, couched in general terms, would be equally suitable for every god and city, so that it is conceivable that similar bricks were used for a like purpose in every place which received back its god. The words of the "proclamation" and of this brick-inscription may, in fact, be abbreviated and modified versions of a general edict from the chancellery of Cyrus.

Inside the sacred area a place was prepared for the god's reception; this was the oft-repaired E-nun-makh, not far from the restored gate. This temple was now brought back into use very much as Nebuchadrezzar had made it, converting the old maze of rooms into a central sanctuary fronting upon a courtyard. This sanctuary was repaved with unstamped bricks, and the old altars and screens replaced. Outside it the courtyard was also repaved and a new altar set before the sanctuary upon the site of the old. In front of this altar a brickwork drain ran from west to east and then took a turn to descend to a lower level. The drain seems to have begun beneath a larger altar, now disappeared, which stood at the left of the smaller one in front of the sanctuary, and since there could hardly be any reason to begin a drain for rain-water or sewage at such a place, it may be

* Ezra i. 2.

presumed that the blood of sacrifice was meant to flow along this channel. Thus an observer approaching the temple as it was restored by Cyrus would have seen the statue of the god standing in the recess of his sanctuary with an altar before him, and outside the sanctuary, in the courtyard, another small altar directly in front of the entrance, and a third altar somewhat to the left of it, with a sink at the head of a drain running across in front of the sanctuary. Rather less than a century after this the Greek traveller Herodotus visited and described Babylon as it was under the Persian kings. He speaks of the chapel at the top of the ziggurrat containing the sumptuous bed and golden table, but no image. After some further remarks upon this, he continues, "there is another temple somewhat lower, wherein is kept the famous monument of the god Jupiter [he means Bêl] wrought of golde, neere unto the which adjoyneth a table which, together with the frame and settle thereto belonging, is also of meere and solide gold, esteemed of the Chaldaean priests at the summe and value of 800 talents. At the comming out of the chappell there is also to be seene an aultar of cleane gold: not farre from the which standeth another of strange and wonderfull bignes, whereon are offered all such beastes as are of perfect age and ripe growth: contrarywise on the aultar of golde it is not lawfull to sacrifice any but sucklings. On the greater of the two aultars, the Chaldaean Chaplaynes burne incense to the god, with expence of a C.M. talents of frankincense." [55] We should

give much to know what Ur might have looked like had Herodotus passed that way about 450—it was almost exactly the date at which it is finally lost to our view—but such, at least, was Babylon then, and such, as the remains prove, had Ur also been when Cyrus re-established its worship for what was to be the last time.

Here, then, about the year 535, the history of Ur virtually ends, for nothing more of a public character is known about it afterwards. Its life certainly did not end here, for there are fairly considerable traces of habitation, buildings and burials, during the Persian rule over the land. Yet the burials are mostly of a modest kind, and there seem to be remains of private or merely utilitarian structures just under the ziggurrat, as though the sanctity of the place was forgotten or disregarded. The directest evidence of this survival of some population is found in a few commercial tablets of the type usual at that period; there was manifestly still a little business afoot. Specimens of these attest transactions in the reigns of Cambyses, Darius, and Artaxerxes; the latest date so far recovered is the 25th year of Artaxerxes, *i.e.* 440 B.C., but the number of these tablets obtained hitherto in the excavations is very small, and will doubtless be increased, so that it is too early to call 440 the last attested year in the life of Ur. None the less it is very unlikely that anything much later will appear, for the Persian "contracts" everywhere become rare after this reign.

It were idle to speculate what happened at the

old city in this its final descent to the desert grave. It is known that Darius razed the walls of Babylon after an abortive revolt, and that Xerxes committed acts of sacrilege and plunder there, but was there then at Ur anything to tempt the bigotry of a Zoroastrian or the cupidity of a despot? More likely death was gradual and lingering, the cult ceased for lack of official approval, the population and the canals which nourished it declined together until the crumbling tower became first a centre and then a mere landmark for a half-nomad population. This is implied in a curious notice which has been preserved from a late Greek writer, which notice is itself the very last allusion to Ur as a place still existent, if indeed so much may be gathered from the expressions used. There has come down to us (at third hand) a fragment purporting to be quoted from the historian Eupolemus,[56] an Alexandrian Jew who wrote several works on Jewish history which have not survived. It may be, however, that the fragment in question was actually written by an imitator of Eupolemus, in the second century. In any case his words are as follows: "in the tenth generation [after the Flood], in the city Kamarina of Babylonia, which some call the city Urié (that is, being interpreted, city of the Chaldaeans), there was born in the thirteenth generation Abraham, who surpassed all in (nobility of) birth and wisdom. He also it was who invented astrology and the Chaldaean art [of magic], and by reason of his eminent piety was well-pleasing to God." There are several

inquiries to which this passage might give occasion, as, for instance, how it was that the Jews, taking this information as they certainly did from Berossus, were able to apply it to Abraham who would naturally be unknown to the Chaldaean priest; also, what ancient Babylonian sage was it whom Abraham has thus displaced? Further, what is the meaning of the observation that Urié (*i.e.* Ur) is by interpretation "a city of the Chaldaeans"? Ur was indeed a city of the Chaldaeans in its later ages, but it was not so by interpretation. It might be surmised that the Jewish author understood the name Ur as being equivalent to his Hebrew word *'ir* "city," although where the name of Ur occurs in the Old Testament it is otherwise spelt; yet it is true also that in Sumerian the word *uru* signified "city." However this may be, the historical interest of the notice is that this writer of the second century B.C. definitely implies that the city of Ur was known to him, or at least that it was known to Berossus, his source, whose own work was written at the beginning of the third century, and that it was at that time the abode of Arabs who called it Kamarina, "moon-city" by a word (*kamar*)[57] peculiar to their own language. Thus the tradition at least of its old worship still endured, but of the worship and even of the city itself perhaps little or nothing. Under the successors of Alexander there was fostered some little revival of Babylonian culture, but it was confined to a very few places, and no reason exists to believe

that Ur had any share in it. While Erech, for example, was still populous, fairly flourishing, and supporting a famous school of astronomers, Ur was already, so we may suppose, unwatered, almost depopulated, and fast declining into the desert. When the last permanent houses disappeared and the temples were long since buried in the dust of their own ruin the solid bulk of the ziggurrat still rose up as a mark and centre for the encampment of nomads, who soon lost even a far-off remembrance of the works of the old infidels, and knew their haunt only by the name of the bitumen which Ur-Nammu had laid between its bricks those thousands of years before.

# NOTES OF AUTHORITIES

*(Additional to the general works mentioned in the Preface. The figures in parentheses refer to pages.)*

## CHAPTER I

[1] (2) Most of the relevant fragments of Berossus are to be found, with an English translation, in I. P. Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 21 ff. All the extant remains have recently been collected by P. Schnabel, *Berossos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur*, pp. 250 ff.

[2] (5) The completest version of this document is inscribed upon a clay prism now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It has been published and translated by S. Langdon in *Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts*, vol. II. In the same place will be found references to the other versions or parts of the list which are hitherto known.

[3] (9) The magical rituals here in question are completely translated by S. Smith in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1926, pp. 695 ff.

[4] (13) For a full description of the prehistoric graves characterized by the painted pottery, see Hall and Woolley, *al-'Ubaid*, pp. 149 ff.

[5] (22) It is only fair, however, to observe that the contrary view was held by Oppert in 1869 (*Comptes-rendus de la société française de numismatique et d'archéologie*, I, 73–76).

[6] (22) See Langdon, *Excavations at Kish*, vol. I, plate XXXI, and p. 99.

[7] (25) From the Babylonian story of the deluge, preserved as the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh story; the most recent translation is by R. C. Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish*. Our quotation appears there on p. 50.

## CHAPTER II

[8] (31) Pl. 6a. A man of similar appearance is also depicted on a fragment from Nippur, in Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 487.

[9] (33) Langdon, *Excavations at Kish*, plates XXXVI and XXXVII.

[10] (38) For a fuller statement, see Woolley, *Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. VIII, pp. 419 ff.

## CHAPTER III

[11] (78) An English translation of the cone-inscription of Entemena is given by Nies and Keiser, *Babylonian inscriptions in the collection of J. B. Nies*, Part II, p. 5, and by Gadd, *Sumerian Reading-book*, no. XV.

[12] (82) See F. Thureau-Dangin, *Les inscriptions de Sumer et d'Akkad*, p. 93.

[13] (83) Lugal-zaggisi's inscription is translated by Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.* p. 219 (English version in Gadd, *op. cit.* no. XIV), and another by A. Poebel, *Historical Texts*, p. 183.

[14] (89) The texts which concern Sargon, either his own inscriptions or later traditions, are numerous ; a good summary of the sources and literature is given by Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, p. 375.

[15] (90) Scheil, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, XIII, p. 178.

[16] (106) Thureau-Dangin, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, IX, pp. 11 ff., and X, p. 99 (English version in Gadd, *op. cit.* no. VII).

## CHAPTER IV

[17] (108) *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1926, p. 684.

[18] (113) The date-formulae of the Third Dynasty may be found in Thureau-Dangin, *Inscriptions de Sumer et d'Akkad*, pp. 329 ff. Not many have since been added, but some new dates of Ibi-Sin are in *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, nos. 197 ff.

[19] (124) Chiera, *Sumerian Religious Texts*, pp. 20, 21.

[20] (128) Text in Virolleaud, *L'astrologie chaldéenne*, Sin XXXIII, 79.

[21] (128) Text, *ibid.* Ishtar, XXI, 12.

[22] (144) *Monuments et mémoires Piot*, XXVII, plate X.

## CHAPTER V

[23] (146) It is alluded to in a Third Dynasty account-tablet as the site of a " garden of the palace " (Keiser, *Selected Temple Documents*, no. 238).

[24] (148) *Revue d'Assyriologie*, VIII, 66, 67. A similar inscription in *Cuneiform Texts*, XXXVI, plate IV.

[25] (150) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, no. 71.

[26] (150) *Ibid.* no. 100.

[27] (154) The date-formulae of the Larsa dynasty are translated into English by E. M. Grice, *Chronology of the Larsa dynasty*.

[28] (160) M. Schorr, *Urkunden des altbab. Zivil- und Prozessrechts*, pp. 582 ff. has conveniently collected the date-formulae of Babylon.

[29] (164) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, no. 123.

[30] (165) Grice, *Records from Ur and Larsa*, no. 167.

[31] (167) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, nos. 122–145.

[32] (169) For details of this system, see Thureau-Dangin, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, XXI, 1 ff., also G. R. Driver, *Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts*, vol. III.

[33] (170) H. R. Hall, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. IX, pp. 88 f.

[34] (176) Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.*, chap. VII, 2.

[35] (181) For a recent fuller discussion of the identity of, and problems connected with, the Habiru, see Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, pp. 191 ff.

[36] (181) The best account of all the Talmudic literature relating to Abraham is in B. Beer, *Leben Abrahams nach Auffassung der jüdischen Sage*.

[37] (184) Recently translated into English by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures;* see especially pp. 28 f. and 145 ff.

## CHAPTER VI

[38] (196) *Cuneiform Texts*, XXXVI, plates 6, 7, translated by Ungnad, *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung*, Band I.

[39] (198) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, plate Q, no. 153.

[40] (205) This king was named Nabu-mukin-apli; see L. W. King, *Chronicles concerning early Babylonian Kings*, II, pp. 80, 81.

[41] (205) On the approximate locations of these tribes or confederations, see Smith, *First Campaign of Sennacherib*, pp. 19 ff.

[42] (207) Several " contracts " of the later Kassites appear among the tablets so far recovered from Ur. The names represented are all later than Kurigalzu ; among them are Kadashman-Enlil, Shagarakti-Shuriash, Kashtiliash, Adad-shum-naṣir, and Meli-Shipak.

[43] (212) Nearly the whole of the extant Assyrian royal inscriptions are now available in English in the two volumes of D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records* (*Assyria and Babylonia*). All the passages used in this chapter will be found there among the inscriptions of Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal (vol. II).

[44] (218) Some of the details in this chapter concerning Ningal-iddina and his sons are derived from the Assyrian letters quoted by A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, pp. 351, 394, 445 ff.

[45] (222) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, nos. 168, 170.

[46] (223) *Ibid.* no. 169 (plate V).

[47] (224) *Ibid.* no. 172 (plates T, U).

## CHAPTER VII

[48] (233) For this and various other circumstances of the reign and religion of Nabonidus and the rise of Cyrus, to be mentioned hereafter, see the " Persian verse-account of Nabonidus" in Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, chap. III, and the " Nabonidus Chronicle," chap. IV.

[49] (236) *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1928, p. 851, note 1.

[50] (237) Published by A. T. Clay, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Collection*, no. 45.

[51] (240) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, no. 187.

[52] (246) The "Verse-account" mentioned above, in note 48.

[53] (250) *Royal Inscriptions from Ur*, no. 307.

[54] (250) *Ibid.* no. 194.

[55] (252) Herodotus, Book I, 183 : translation by B. R. (1584).

[56] (254) See above, pp. 12, 177. The passage is printed and translated by Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 57.

[57] (255) It should be observed, however, that others derive the name Kamarina from a root meaning " to be hot," and see in it simply another allusion to the Rabbinic interpretation of the name of Ur : M. Gaster, *The Asatir*, p. 18.

## ADDITIONAL NOTE

[58] (199) Further excavation of this court (1928-1929) has shown that its architectural history is more complicated than as here described, but its character remains unexplained.

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